THE WAR OF THE ROSES

Second Draft
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THE WAR OF THE ROSES

FADE IN:

EXT. NANTUCKET BEACH - LATE AFTERNOON

A THUNDERHEAD moves in from the Atlantic.

A LEGEND APPEARS: Nantucket Labor Day 1966

On the nearly deserted BEACH an OLD MAN, followed by a stout OLD LADY carrying a shovel, sweeps the sand with a metal detector.

At the DOCKS, a FISHERMAN hoses off the deck of his BOAT, ignoring a MOTHER and her TWO CHILDREN who "wave goodbye to the captain". The FATHER, sitting in an idling car, beeps the car horn.

Outside an INN, a honeymooning couple carry their suitcases down the street, passing--

JONATHAN ROSE, a young fellow with longish hair and a summer beard, wearing a tee shirt, shorts, and carpenter's apron. He finishes boarding up the window of an antique store specializing in whaling artifacts. He pogosticks his ladder from one side of the window to the other, checks his watch, and picks up the pace of his work.

EXT. CHOWDERHOUSE RESTAURANT

The SOUND of the HAMMER echoes.

The RESTAURANT MANAGER ushers out a FAMILY. He replaces the wooden "Open" sign with one reading "Closed 'til April".

BARBARA'S VOICE
Well, summer's over and I didn't fall in love...

INT. CHOWDERHOUSE RESTAURANT

A MUZAK SEA CHANTY cuts off, replaced by a GRATEFUL DEAD TUNE of the period. A lone LOBSTER looks through the glass of the lobster tank.

BARBARA and CONSTANCE

both in nautical waitress outfits, clear a table. BARBARA is young and beautiful by most of the western world's standards. CONSTANCE isn't.

BARBARA
(continuing)
...So I guess you owe me fifty bucks.

CONSTANCE
I owe you fifty bucks?

BARBARA
We made that bet...our first day here...remember? I said, "I bet I don't fall in love this summer"? And you said, "Oh, I bet you do"? And I said, "How much?" And you said, "Fifty bucks." And we shook on it.

CONSTANCE
You call that a bet?

CONSTANCE picks up her half-full tray and heads toward the kitchen. BARBARA balances her filled tray and follows.

INT. KITCHEN

CONSTANCE unloads her tray. BARBARA unloads hers.

BARBARA
If I'd have met someone, I'd have paid you.

CONSTANCE
Yeah, you probably would've.

BARBARA
Please don't turn this into a contest of wills--

CONSTANCE shakes her head and spouts derisive nostril air. BARBARA, seemingly defeated, exits to a small room off the kitchen. CONSTANCE smiles at the SOUND of LOCKERS SLAMMING.

COOK'S ASSISTANT
It's bad karma to welsh on a bet, Constance.

CONSTANCE
I'm not paying her fifty dollars just because she couldn't get laid.

BARBARA
(calls from room)
It was not about--
(with distaste)
getting "laid."

BARBARA appears with an embroidered leather Afghanistani jacket over her arm.

BARBARA
See ya.

She EXITS.

CONSTANCE
Hey, that's my jacket!

INT. RESTAURANT

CONSTANCE charges after BARBARA who, with surprising ease and grace, evades her by vaulting a table. She holds the jacket above the lobster tank's greenish water.

CONSTANCE makes a move, BARBARA dips the fur fringe.

CONSTANCE
O-kay--

CONSTANCE digs a wad of money from her bra and throws it.

BARBARA catches it one handed against her chest.

BARBARA
(throwing Constance
the jacket)
See ya.

CONSTANCE
Hey, double or nothin' you never fall in love.

BARBARA opens the door and is illuminated by a lightning flash; she EXITS, the DOOR CLOSES with a RUMBLE OF THUNDER.

EXT. NANTUCKET STREET - LATER

RAIN FALLS as BARBARA strides along, carrying a suitcase and small bag. She sees--

A SIGN, reading: "Estate Auction Today 6:00 p.m."

A LARGE TENT is erected in the yard of a beautifully simple, 19th century, Cape Cod house.

INT. AUCTION TENT

PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS dodge drips as they survey items. Among them is--

JONATHAN, now dressed in faded jeans, workshirt, and blue blazer, a raincoat over his arm. He surreptitiously checks a dog-eared paperback which lists values of antiques.

BARBARA scans the items, accidentally nudging people with her suitcase. She sees JONATHAN, and her gaze holds. THUNDER SOUNDS. A low and sexy RUMBLE.

A young, female AUCTIONEER'S ASSISTANT, identified by a nametag, collects items on a tray. As she picks up an IVORY CARVING (a small, exquisitely detailed Chinese woman reclining nude on a teak chaise)--

JONATHAN
What do you think something like that might go for?

ASSISTANT
Twenty dollars... maybe twenty-two.

He nods, a self-satisfied smile spreading across his face. A drip hits BARBARA'S forehead and runs down her nose.

She sloshes after JONATHAN toward the center of the tent.

INT. AUCTION TENT - LATER

RAIN BEATS LOUDLY on the tent.

AUCTIONEER
Sold to the gentleman in the Donegal tweed for forty-eight dollars.

The AUCTIONEER holds up the IVORY CARVING.

JONATHAN centers himself, clutching his money.

AUCTIONEER
The next item up for bid is a Japanese carving--

JONATHAN
(smugly knowledgeable)
Chinese.

AUCTIONEER
Ivory on a teak base, richly detailed--

JONATHAN
Ten dollars!

AUCTIONEER
(pause)
I have ten dollars from the premature young man in the blue blazer.

BARBARA
Ten dollars and fifty cents.

AUCTIONEER
Dollar amounts only, please.

BARBARA
Why's that?

AUCTIONEER
I have ten dollars.

BARBARA
Okay, have it your way...eleven.

JONATHAN bids twenty; BARBARA, twenty-one; JONATHAN, twenty-two.

ANOTHER BIDDER
Twenty five.

JONATHAN and BARBARA give the BIDDER withering looks.

JONATHAN
Thirty.

BARBARA
Thirty-one.

JONATHAN riffles through his money--forty dollars.

JONATHAN
Forty dollars.

He shoots her a peremptory look.

BARBARA
(pause)
Fifty...

AUCTIONEER
Fifty dollars, fifty dollars, do I hear Sixty? Fifty five? Fifty one? Fifty dollars going once, going twice--
(gavels)
Sold to the pretty girl in the white blouse for fifty dollars.

BARBARA brushes past JONATHAN on her way to claim her prize. THUNDER CRACKLES.

EXT. AUCTION TENT

The RAIN has slowed as BARBARA emerges and walks away, glancing back once quickly to see if JONATHAN is following. He isn't. Her expression dims.

EXT. NANTUCKET STREET

BARBARA walks toward the ferry. As she passes a doorway, JONATHAN steps out and walks behind her.

JONATHAN
That auctioneer didn't know what he was doing.

BARBARA
What?

JONATHAN
The auctioneer... he said it was Japanese but it's Chinese. What you bought. It's a Chinese medical homunculus. I guess you knew that.

BARBARA
No. I just bought it because I liked it. What is it?

JONATHAN
You know what it's worth? I do.

BARBARA
It doesn't matter. I'll never sell it.

They walk silently for a few paces.

JONATHAN
A hundred and fifty dollars.

BARBARA
(looks right at him)
I guess I have a good eye.

The RAIN increases. Her skin shows through the now translucent cotton. JONATHAN notices this. He ducks into a doorway, thinking she'll follow. But she continues jauntily on through the rain. He steps out and catches up, adopting her jaunty style.

JONATHAN
Can I carry that for you?

She hands him the suitcase and the bag. Her breasts show through the wet blouse. She tilts her head back and closes her eyes, catching raindrops on her tongue. JONATHAN looks directly at her breasts. His young throat constricts.

BARBARA
I love the rain, don't you?

JONATHAN
Oh god yes.

EXT. FERRY LANDING

The ferry's engines idle as people board.

BARBARA and JONATHAN walk onto the dock. He sets down the suitcase. She takes off his coat.

JONATHAN
I know what you're thinking--
Harvard Law--woo woo woo. But I got a scholarship. I'm not rich or anything. I'm brilliant. How about you?

BARBARA
I'm not rich or brilliant.

JONATHAN
I mean where are you going to school?

BARBARA
Wisconsin. I got a scholarship, too. Gymnastics. But I don't know, my body's getting too big--

JONATHAN
No, it doesn't look it--

BARBARA
It's like a pendulum--the longer it is, the slower it moves. So my tumbling and vaulting's not what it used to be. I can still do the "strength moves."

JONATHAN
Uh huh. What are those?

BARBARA stands, bends, and puts her palms on the dock. Then, slowly, incredibly, her feet lift, her legs split, and she rises into a HANDSTAND.

JONATHAN
(framed between her legs)
I love Nantucket!

Her legs close, and as her feet touch, the ferry WHISTLE BLOWS. BARBARA wobbles; JONATHAN hugs her legs to his chest.

BARBARA
(upside down)
I better go.

He helps her to her feet.

JONATHAN
Well, what if I ride over with you?

BARBARA
And then come all the way back?

JONATHAN
Yeah, I see what you mean, so, well, no--

BARBARA
Yeah, well, yeah. Who knows, I may need a brilliant lawyer some day.

BARBARA boards and makes her way forward.

JONATHAN stands, clutching his raincoat, then turns and starts away as the ferry's engines churn. He stops, turns, and runs for the ferry, leaping aboard the stern.

SIMULTANEOUSLY -- BARBARA'S SUITCASE hits the dock alongside the ferry. BARBARA leaps the railing, picks up her suitcase, and runs back toward where she left JONATHAN.

BARBARA
Jonathan!

JONATHAN, ON BOARD THE FERRY, hears her.

JONATHAN
Barbara?

He pushes through the crowd and runs to the stern.

BARBARA, realizing the situation, lofts her suitcase aboard and LEAPS, passing JONATHAN as he leaps off. They prepare to leap again, but BARBARA jumps first. JONATHAN catches her.

JONATHAN
We obviously don't handle separation well.

BARBARA
All my things!
(calls)
My suitcase!

The SUITCASE is flung from the ferry and spins toward the dock, but falls short and lands in the water. It rises and falls on the small, sea green waves.

INT. JONATHAN'S ROOM - DAY

The sea green blanket rises and falls. PANNING the small, rented room: clothes are draped over chairs and lamps; a framed Jean Dupas watercolor; an art deco radio. The few possessions of Jonathan stand out amid the pedestrian rented furnishing.

BARBARA gives out a sharp bark of pleasure.

BARBARA'S VOICE
I'm sorry.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Never, never, never apologize for being multi-orgasmic.

JONATHAN and BARBARA squirm their way from the foot back to the head of the tousled bed.

BARBARA
I honestly didn't know I was.

JONATHAN
(peppering her with kisses)
Oh, bless you.

He puts a pillow behind her head. They lie there grinning.

BARBARA
If we end up together...this is the most romantic day of my life.
(pause)
And if we don't...I'm a slut.

JONATHAN
(pause)
This'll be the story we tell our grandchildren.

They hold each other as the light fades out.

There is the SOUND of another sharp bark of pleasure, and we are--

INT. DOUGLAS (BARBARA'S PARENTS) KITCHEN - DAY

And it's not BARBARA who's doing the pleasant barking this time. It's her mother, VI DOUGLAS, a large woman with thinning, over-permed hair, who at the moment is hugging BARBARA as hard as she can.

BARBARA
I haven't said yes.

VI
(releasing her)
Why not?

BARBARA
I'm not sure--

VI
Your dad and I think he's a peach.

The small kitchen is yellow with flower decals on the cupboards--solidly low-middle-class. VI looks out the kitchen window at JONATHAN, who is in the front yard with BARBARA'S FATHER, a thin chain smoker. Her father and Jonathan peer into the open hood of a CHEVROLET. Barbara's father works on the engine as Jonathan points and gives advice.

BARBARA
He is, but, you know, I have another year of school--

VI
Pshaw--

BARBARA
No, I--I'd like to at least get my B.A. degree.

VI
So you can be a home ec teacher like me?

BARBARA
No, mom,--I don't know if I'm--I mean we're pretty serious and -- it isn't that I don't love him, it's just--

Her eyes widen, full of inexplanation. VI nods.

VI
Some people have to be a hundred percent sure before they get married...they're called old maids.

BARBARA
What's wrong with you? What kind of advice is that for you to give me?

VI
Thoroughly true advice. The kind you should grab if you're lucky enough to get it.

INT. A GRAND ROOM - DAY

A fire is burning in a large, ornate fireplace, the mouth of which is as high as the two wing chairs facing each other across the oriental carpet which flanks the hearth. In those chairs sit JONATHAN and his father, EDMUND ROSE, who, for some reason, is wearing a tuxedo.

JONATHAN
(a nervous chuckle)
Because she said yes.

EDMUND
That's not a reason to get married.

JONATHAN
We love each other.

EDMUND
(waves that reason off, too)
I have found there are four things that tell the world who you are--listen to me, Jonathan--four things...the shoes you wear, the car you drive, the house you live in and the woman you marry.

EDMUND looks at Jonathan's scuffed brogans.

JONATHAN
If she were next to me, you wouldn't be looking at my shoes.

EDMUND
You're just starting law school. You have no idea where--who--you'll be in five years. Would it hurt to wait? Why not wait? Uh?

JONATHAN thinks, then shrugs, a big goony smile spreading on his face. EDMUND can't help smiling at his lovestruck kid.

EDMUND
(rising)
Well--

JONATHAN rises. EDMUND starts across the room, which can now clearly be seen to be the lobby of a very classy, small hotel.

EDMUND
Tell her I said she's getting a lunkhead for a husband.

EDMUND moves behind a counter on which is a placard labeling him the concierge. He begins to help a WEALTHY COUPLE.

JONATHAN salutes his father, and goes out the revolving door.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - NIGHT

A LEGEND APPEARS: Cambridge Christmas Eve 1969

SNOW falls as BARBARA, dressed in a long coat, hurries toward the entrance of a building: stores below, student apartments above. She looks happily back down the block, then pushes through the door.

INT. BUILDING STAIRWELL

With the coat unbuttoned it is clear she is more than six months pregnant. She takes the stairs two at a time.

INT. ROSE APARTMENT

JONATHAN, unshaved and puffy, works at a table covered with books and papers. A TINY HAND reaches over the edge of the table and pulls some papers onto the floor.

JONATHAN bends over and comes face to face with a pudgy, curly haired, baby girl named EVE. He pulls the papers, she hangs on:

JONATHAN
May I have the papers? Eve?

EVE
No.

JONATHAN
I'll trade you (your bow-wow for the papers.)

He holds out a warm, stuffed dog; she reaches for it; he snatches away the papers; she squalls.

BARBARA enters. The apartment is furnished with a few good pieces of furniture; a burlwood cabinet holds the ivory carving and several pieces of Staffordshire ceramics. A small CHRISTMAS TREE, a living one in a bucket, is tastefully adorned with tiny white lights and a few great ornaments.

BARBARA
Mom's home. Hi, squeezy.

She kisses JONATHAN on the head, takes a paperwrapped pastry from her pocket, and sticks it in Eve's mouth, stopping her crying.

BARBARA
It pays to be a pregnant waitress on Christmas Eve. If I didn't have to split tips we'd be fabulously well-off. I splurged--

She crosses to the Christmas tree, takes a silver foil star from a bag and happily places it atop the tree.

JONATHAN looks at it and shakes his head, no. The star isn't up to the quality of the other ornaments.

BARBARA
You're right. It doesn't make it. I'll learn.

She throws the star into a wastebasket of crumpled papers near the table.

BARBARA
How about taking a walk?

JONATHAN
I have to finish this brief.

BARBARA
And it's cold, it's snowing, it's Christmas Eve. I'm asking you to take a walk. Why? Huh? Doesn't that set your Harvard honed legal mind to whirring?

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - NIGHT

JONATHAN carries EVE, who is thickly bundled. He makes an appreciative "hmnh" sound as they pass a parked, snow-covered car.

BARBARA
What?

JONATHAN
There was a Morgan back there.

BARBARA
A Morgan? Oh, those boxy English cars. Didn't Quentin Tanner have one?

JONATHAN
He had an MG. He wishes he had a Morgan.

They reach the corner and stop, shivering.

BARBARA
It must be ten below...we should've taken your car.

JONATHAN is confused for a moment. He doesn't have a car. Then the realization hits and he whirls back toward the Morgan, whirls again, handing EVE to BARBARA.

JONATHAN
(joyfully sidestepping)
You got me a Morgan!

BARBARA
Yes!

BARBARA moves carefully after JONATHAN, who literally skips down the block to the car.

JONATHAN
A Morgan, I can't believe you did this, you're so fantastic--

BARBARA giggles, thrilled to see him so thrilled. He brushes snow from the car, revealing a scabrous yellow paint job. The car is not in great shape. But it is a Morgan.

JONATHAN
It's great, it's incredible--
looks at the grill--
glass windows--
it's so classic--
rack and pinion steering--
a little rust--
I'm restoring it myself--

BARBARA
1957 drophead coupe--
helluva grill--
roadsters have plastic--
the chef's brother brought it over from England--
it needs work--
We'll write Morgan himself--

JONATHAN
How much did you pay for it?

BARBARA
It's a present. I used my money.

JONATHAN
Yeah, but your money is our money. Can we afford this?

BARBARA
(laughs)
No!
(his face falls)
You're going to be a huge success. This may be our last opportunity to worry about money. Get in. Here--it's right hand drive.

INT. MORGAN

They slide in; BARBARA hands him the key.

BARBARA
Do you love it?

JONATHAN
Great wood steering wheel, cracked leather seats, ivory knobs--
(leans to kiss her)
A little tough to kiss to the left but I'll learn.

BARBARA
You're happy.

JONATHAN
No. I'm more than happy, I'm way past happy. I'm--

BARBARA
Married.

JONATHAN beams, nods, and turns the key. The starter grinds and dies.

BARBARA
This is part of the charm of English cars.

BARBARA hands EVE to JONATHAN and reaches into the backseat.

EXT. MORGAN

BARBARA climbs out, holding a HANDCRANK. She inserts it through the front bumper, turns it, nothing. Again. Nothing.

JONATHAN
(pokes his head out)
Need a hand?

BARBARA
I've just about got it.
(clenched teeth)
Start or I'll crush you and dump you in the Charles Rivers.

She gives a mighty, grunting crank; the engine burbles to life.

INT. MORGAN

BARBARA climbs in, cold and redfaced. She takes baby EVE.

BARBARA
You still love it?

JONATHAN
I love this car so much I'm never going to let you drive it.

BARBARA punches him playfully but hard. He puts it in gear.

EXT. STREET

The MORGAN pulls away into the snowy night.

EXT. WASHINGTON STREET - NIGHT

A LEGEND APPEARS: Washington D.C. 1978

The MORGAN, in an advanced stage of restoration, is parked in front of a middle income apartment building. Also parked are a Mercedes and a Cadillac.

INT. APARTMENT DINING ROOM

Actually a dining area at one end of the living room. The apartment is larger than the last one and furnished with good pieces.

BARBARA, now about thirty, carefully clears a salad plate from in front of MRS. DELL, an older woman with lacquered hair. Conversation continues among the EIGHT DINNER GUESTS, all couples older than JONATHAN and BARBARA. As she clears the plate from in front of JONATHAN, who sits at the head of the table, he strokes her arm and whispers--

JONATHAN
(sotto)
Help you later--

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN

A tiny kitchen even by the standards of tiny apartment kitchens. A few copper pans and baskets hang on the walls.

EVE, now ten and chubby, dries bowls which JOSH, eight has washed.

EVE
I know the kids call me a name, what is it?

JOSH
Nothing.

EVE
You can tell me. I know I'm heavy. I won't get mad. Come on, Josh.

JOSH
Fatsoboombalatso.

As EVE takes this in--

BARBARA enters and lowers the stack of plates over JOSH and into the sink.

BARBARA
Hey, wash these up so I can use them for dessert then you can get ready for bed.

BARBARA opens the small oven and looks in at two skewers holding pale game hens over a shallow pan. She pulls the pan from the oven, burning her hand, but she grits her teeth, swallowing the pain. She wiggles a leg on one of the hens to check for doneness.

JONATHAN breezes through the door with empty wine bottles.

JONATHAN
You think they'll notice if I switch to the Portuguese wine? Probably.
(to Josh)
How's it going, sport?
(to Barbara)
Are those done?

BARBARA
Yes, but they didn't brown.

JONATHAN
--How could they not brown?

BARBARA
Albino gamehens. I don't know, the oven's too small or the thermostat's off or--

JONATHAN moves JOSH out of the way and leans his head against the refrigerator, distraught.

BARBARA
It's not like it's the end of your career. We'll turn down the lights.

JONATHAN
I knew it was going too well--

BARBARA opens a cabinet and takes out a bottle of pear brandy.

BARBARA
Okay, you want them brown and you want them brown quick? Stand back.

She empties the bottle on the hens, lights a match and touches it to the hens, which BURST INTO FLAMES.

JONATHAN and the kids press against the walls as BARBARA lifts the flaming skewers like a baton twirler.

INT. DINING ROOM

A knifeblade slices into a perfectly brown gamehen. A fork moves a piece to the mouth of EMMET MARSHALL, the head of the law firm for which JONATHAN works.

MARSHALL
Mmm.

JONATHAN looks across the table at BARBARA, who returns his look. The hair over her forehead is singed and sticks out like little antennae.

MR. DELL
You got a great cook there, Jonathan. I have a great cook, too.
(smiles at his wife)
Lillian hired him.

MRS. DELL
Give her time.

JONATHAN
More wine, Mrs. Marshall?

MRS. MARSHALL
Please. Your crystal is lovely. Baccarat?

JONATHAN pours, his hand covering the wine bottle label.

JONATHAN
Yes.

MR. MARSHALL slams his hand down on the table, making the plates and guests jump.

MR. MARSHALL
We're paying our associates too much!

MR. MARSHALL laughs. JONATHAN laughs very loudly and too long. BARBARA manages a smile.

MRS. MARSHALL
I've never seen this pattern.

JONATHAN
We got it in Paris on our fifth anniversary. It's kind of an interesting story. Why don't you tell it, Barb?

All eyes turn to her as she just takes a bite of food. She chews, holding up a finger, then swallows.

BARBARA
Well...we were in Paris and we had just had lunch at a little place in the market district... what was it called? Pied d'Cochon. The onion soup was the best and someone next to us ordered mussels which looked really just the way mussels in Paris should look.

JONATHAN smiles, his eyes darting from guest to guest.

BARBARA
(continuing)
Anyway--we were wandering around and we ended up on this street called Rue de Paradis. Which is where Baccarat has its factory and a museum. Before Jonathan told me about Baccarat, I thought it was a card game. I mean my mother bought her glasses at the A and P. You know, the kind with the raised flowers that chip off after a couple years, and they're always yellow flowers.

MRS. MARSHALL smiles and begins eating again.

BARBARA
(continuing)
So, there was an enormous room filled with every kind of crystal ever made, all of it hand blown...it was all so incredibly beautiful...I felt, you know, penetrated by the beauty of it all.

She looks at JONATHAN, remembering the emotion of the moment.

BARBARA
(continuing)
Some of the pieces were so delicate we were afraid if we talked above a whisper they'd shatter. We just stood there holding hands. And then from another room we heard the sound of glass breaking. Well, I looked at Jonathan and he looked at me--
(suddenly realizing she left a detail out)
Oh, wait, before this we had seen a limousine outside--

MR. MARSHALL stifles a yawn. JONATHAN stiffens.

JONATHAN
(cutting her off quickly)
And to make a long story short, a wealthy French couple had ordered a special design for their anniversary and by the time it was ready they were getting divorced so the wife was smashing her half and I convinced the husband to sell us his half cheap, just to spite her.

JONATHAN catches Barbara's eye; she stares down at her plate.

JONATHAN
Baccarat speaks for itself.

JONATHAN flips the rim of his glass, making it ring. MR. MARSHALL flips the rim of his glass, then other guests flip the rims of their glasses, creating a harmony of tones.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

JONATHAN and BARBARA lie in the dark.

JONATHAN
I think everyone had a great time.
(silence)
Don't you think?

BARBARA
To make a long story short--no.

JONATHAN
I'm sorry but you were rambling on--

BARBARA
Next time you tell the stories.
(pause)
If you care so desperately what everyone thinks...fuckface.

JONATHAN
They're my bosses! Two associates will make partner this year, and they decide. You want to keep living in this apartment? Because you don't buy a house on an associate's salary--not the kind of house we'd want. Yes, I care what they think, I care, right, I care--shoot me!

A long silence.

BARBARA
That phony laugh you did--

BARBARA laughs like a sodden department store Santa.

JONATHAN
It was a genuine laugh.

BARBARA laughs on, stops, throws in a couple more "ho-ho's".

JONATHAN
Okay, so I forced it a little to keep it going.
(pause)
God, I hope they didn't notice what a jerk I am.

BARBARA
(a pause)
They never seem to.

JONATHAN chuckles. A less secure man might be threatened. But JONATHAN appreciates her wit. And to prove he is no stranger to repartee he leans over as if to kiss her neck but instead blows, making a TUBA SOUND on her neck. BARBARA stares at the ceiling.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Large homes with great green front yards. A FORD STATIONWAGON speeds down the street, brakes to a stop, backs up.

INT. STATIONWAGON

BARBARA, at the wheel, looks out the passenger window. EVE is in the front seat, wearing a warm-up suit, JOSH is in the back, wearing a soccer uniform.

JOSH
Mom, I'm gonna be late for practice.

BARBARA
That's a great house. I like that house.

She backs the car to the curb. EVE, who knows the drill, opens the glove compartment and takes out a sheaf of stationery imprinted with Barbara's name and phone number, and a fat Montblanc pen.

BARBARA writes a note in straight, bold handwriting.

Dear Owner--I love your house! If you ever consider selling it, please call me. Thanks, Barbara Rose.

EVE
(over note)
You've been doing this for a year and nobody's called--

BARBARA
So, what does that mean?

BARBARA gets out of the car.

EXT. HOUSE

BARBARA hurries up the walkway, smiling at the two stories of brick, the casement windows, the fanlight over the door. She sticks the note into the doorjamb; the door opens.

A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN in a dark dress stands there.

BARBARA
Sorry to disturb you. I was just leaving a note--

WOMAN
That's very kind. Please, come in.

BARBARA
Well, all right.

She holds up a finger to the kids in the car and enters.

INT. HOUSE FOYER

Twenty-five foot high ceiling, curved staircase, stone quarry tile floor. A magnificent entry.

WOMAN
I don't believe we've met--

BARBARA
Barbara Rose.

WOMAN
I'm Maureen--my mother had so many friends....

BARBARA looks off into the LIVING ROOM, which is filled with people quietly drinking and eating. A man, TOM DOBBS, in a three piece suit approaches.

TOM
I have to be going, Maureen. We'll go over the will when you feel ready.

BARBARA takes a deep breath and blows it out.

TOM
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt--

BARBARA
Oh, no--

MAUREEN
(to Tom)
Mom loved this old place. I want it to go to someone who'll love it as much as she did. That's more important to me than whatever money we get for it.

BARBARA looks heavenward, her eyes filling with tears. MAUREEN puts a hand on BARBARA'S arm.

MAUREEN
I know how you feel.

EXT. HOUSE

JOSH and EVE wait in the car; they look toward the house as BARBARA emerges.

BARBARA walks out onto the porch, stops, and raises her arms, flushed with victorious joy.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The house is obscured by a MOVING VAN parked in front. The MORGAN is parked in the driveway. BARBARA'S STATIONWAGON, packed with personal belongings is ahead of the MORGAN.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
Could you tell them to take it easy because all those things are very--

MOVER'S VOICE
We know, Mr. Rose. Mrs. Rose already warned us.

On the other side of the van TWO MOVERS move an armoire down a ramp. JONATHAN wears a suit.

JONATHAN
Uh, one more thing...

He looks toward the house, where BARBARA, EVE, and JOSH wait on the porch.

JONATHAN
Could you guys have a smoke or a doughnut...just give us a couple of minutes alone in the house before you bring everything in?

MOVER
(looks at watch unhappily)
Sure.

JONATHAN jogs to the porch. BARBARA holds a picnic basket.

JONATHAN
Okay, here we go--

He sweeps BARBARA up in his arms.

JONATHAN
(before she protests)
It's the first threshold that's really ours.

He carries her in as JOSH tries to pick up EVE, but she resists.

EVE
I don't want to be picked up. I hate to be picked up.

JOSH holds on to one leg; EVE hops across the threshold.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The ROSES stand together, gazing at the completely empty but still grand living room. There's a high cove ceiling; limestone fireplace, wood plank floors, large paned windows. The paint has faded in areas not covered by paintings or drapes; the floor is unmarred in the areas where furniture was.

EVE
Can we go up and pick our rooms?

JONATHAN
We can do whatever we want, it's our house.

JOSH runs and does a long, standing slide across the floor.

JONATHAN
(pointing a warning finger)
Hey, sport--

JOSH
Who gets first pick? As if I had to ask.

EVE
I had first pick of bunk beds at the apartment--you can go first, Josh.

JOSH
(a little touched)
Thanks.

The kids head for the stairs, BARBARA and JONATHAN smile.

JONATHAN
I think we have a happy house here.

BARBARA
Our house.
(walking across room)
I've never lived anywhere where I could walk so far in a straight line.

JONATHAN
Everything we own will fit in one corner of this room.

BARBARA nods, feeling a little wave of fear about the task of making the house liveable.

JONATHAN
(walking to her)
Don't get scared, we'll do it together.

He puts an arm around her and kisses her forehead.

JONATHAN
I'll try to be home early.

BARBARA
You really have to go, huh?

JONATHAN
Somebody's got to pay for all this.

He starts for the door, leaving BARBARA alone and forlorn in the huge living room.

JONATHAN
Come on...this is a great day.

BARBARA forces a brave smile. JONATHAN EXITS. BARBARA stands alone, a bit afraid, as she looks at the large room--or as she sees it, her first empty canvas.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A light is on downstairs. Upstairs the windows are dark. MOVE IN on one of the darkened windows.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

JONATHAN is asleep. There is a SOUND: slide...BUMP...slide... BUMP. JONATHAN awakes, listens, turns to BARBARA, but she's not there.

INT. STAIRWAY

BARBARA, dressed in a shorty nightie, pulls a cabinet up the stairs...slide Bump.

JONATHAN, at the top of the stairs, focuses on her haunches showing through the translucent nightie.

INT. STAIRWAY

BARBARA is a few steps from the top.

JONATHAN
Barb--

BARBARA startles and lets go of the cabinet, which clunks down the stairs to the bottom.

JONATHAN
What're you doing?

EVE and JOSH appear beside him, awakened by the noise.

JOSH
Is she still moving stuff?

BARBARA
I was just...I had an idea where the cabinet would be perfect.

JOSH and EVE nod and shamble off to their rooms.

JONATHAN sits BARBARA down on the stairs. He sits a stair above her, straddling her, and rubs her shoulders.

JONATHAN
We don't have to get everything perfect the first day.

His hands move slowly down, massaging toward her breasts.

BARBARA
I want to restuff the pillows on the couch with down.

JONATHAN
First thing in the morning.

BARBARA
You want to look at some fabric swatches?

JONATHAN
Hunh uh.

BARBARA
Paint chips?

He kisses her neck.

BARBARA
(moving away; concentrating on the room)
Please stop, Jonathan. I'm too excited.

BARBARA stands in the middle of the room.

BARBARA
(continuing)
Promise me... promise me... let's only have things in our house that we really love.

JONATHAN nods, feeling just a twinge of jealousy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

JONATHAN and BARBARA stand in the entry. Between and around them we can see the room is bare except for a couch and coffee table from the apartment. The CAMERA MOVES around to JONATHAN'S PROFILE.

JONATHAN
I know just how it should look.

The CAMERA MOVES back around JONATHAN, and we see the LIVING ROOM AS HE ENVISIONS IT: beige walls, overstuffed furniture in solid fabrics, oak pieces, a large painting. Very tasteful, masculine, pragmatic, comfortable.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO MOVE to BARBARA'S PROFILE.

BARBARA
It's an easy room to do.

The CAMERA MOVES back around BARBARA, and we see the LIVING ROOM AS SHE ENVISIONS IT: white walls, furniture covered in colors and patterns, pine pieces, eclectically antique and modern.

JONATHAN and BARBARA'S FACES beam as they walk into the room, which appears as it actually is.

JONATHAN
This is going to be fun.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

BARBARA, using a long handled roller, finishes painting the ceiling.

BARBARA
Are you sure you can't come back tomorrow? I know the painters are going to show up anytime now.

She looks at two HAPPY FLOOR REFINISHERS, who sit in the entry with their sanders and buckets of stain.

FLOOR REFINISHER
Oh you're doing a great job.

MOVE IN on the roller and the WHITE SURFACE.

EVE (V.O.)
I like this wallpaper.

BARBARA (V.O.)
It's fine in another color--

EVE (V.O.)
What's wrong with black?

JONATHAN (V.O.)
It's your room, Eve, get what you want.

FLORAL WALLPAPER is rolled onto the white surface. PULL BACK to reveal--

INT. EVE'S ROOM - DAY

JONATHAN and BARBARA carry an antique bureau in.

BARBARA (V.O.)
I found a great hutch. Do you love it?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A large, bare, pine hutch stands against the wall.

JONATHAN (V.O.)
It's nice.

BARBARA (V.O.)
Okay. I'll take it back.

The HUTCH slides out of frame.

BARBARA (V.O.)
I found a few things.

The HUTCH slides back in, now filled with an assortment of items. Each one a "find". Each one loved: handpainted plates, bowls, figurines. PULL BACK to reveal the kitchen: great weathered brick floor, glass pane cabinets, racks of copper pots and pans, commercial stove, sub-zero refrigerator. A kitchen any cook would kill for.

JONATHAN (V.O.)
Happy anniversary.

JONATHAN'S THUMB pushes a button on a remote control unit.,

A BANG & OLUFSEN STEREO plays.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JONATHAN and BARBARA dance slowly in the dimly lit room. A GRANDFATHER CLOCK CHIMES the hour.

BARBARA (V.O.)
Mrs. Dewitt, the consul's wife, said she thought my duck pate was good enough to sell.

JONATHAN (V.O.)
She's a funny old gal...you humored her?

BARBARA (V.O.)
I sold her twenty bucks worth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The LIVING ROOM fades up from darkness to full light. A full grown FRENCH POODLE, BENNIE, bounds through the room. We now see that the almost finished room has much more the feeling envisioned by BARBARA.

BARBARA (V.O.)
Josh, don't let Bennie in the living room.

JOSH (V.O.)
He's not my dog.

SUSAN (V.O.)
(English accent)
I'll deal with the beast, missus.

SUSAN, a fresh-scrubbed lass in her early twenties, carefully maneuvers among the collectibles and furniture and throws a tackle on the dog. She pulls him toward the front door.

INT. ENTRY - DAY

The GRANDFATHER CLOCK in the curve of the staircase ticks. PAN UP to see a large, ornate CRYSTAL CHANDELIER hung fifteen feet above the clock.

EVE comes down the stairs, looking a little taller and a lot thinner. She is dressed in tight pants and loose blouse, just on the verge of looking trampy.

SUSAN
How about walking Bennie?

EVE
He's not my dog. I'll be back by dinner.

EVE exits.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

SUSAN ejects BENNIE. A CAT lounges on the porch.

SUSAN
Play with the cat, Bennie.

SUSAN watches EVE get into a car, a BMW 2000, with two GEORGETOWN SOPHOMORES.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Lights go on.

A LEGEND APPEARS: Chevy Chase 1987

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BARBARA cooks an elaborate birthday dinner. Right now she slices liver for her pate. Waiting anxiously for a tossed tidbit are BENNIE, the poodle, and JANICE, the cat. BARBARA fakes a toss, sending BENNIE scrabbling across the brick floor. She drops the piece of liver to the cat, which quickly devours it. BENNIE returns to wait. BARBARA fakes another toss, sending BENNIE running, then drops the piece to the cat. BENNIE gives up and disappears down the basement stairs.

INT. BASEMENT

A neatly arranged workshop occupies one wall. On another wall a timer ticks next to a wooden door with a small glass window--the door to the SAUNA. SUSAN sorts clothes near a washer and dryer. BENNIE sits outside the sauna, looking up at the timer, which DINGS. JONATHAN emerges wrapping a short, terrycloth robe around himself.

BENNIE puts his paws on JONATHAN'S CHEST. JONATHAN, the only person in the family who seems to like the dog, rubs his head.

JONATHAN
Ah, good Bennie-Bennie-Bennie-Boy. Yah! Big night tonight!

SUSAN watches, smiling.

JONATHAN
How're you doing, Susan? Not working too hard are you?

SUSAN
No, sir.

JONATHAN
You know, you can use the sauna anytime.

SUSAN
Thank you, but, I don't perspire easily and,..yes, thank you, I'll--

JONATHAN heads up the stairs, with BENNIE bounding ahead. As he nears the top, SUSAN bends slightly, tilts her head, in an apparent effort to peek up Jonathan's robe.

SUSAN
(realizing what she's doing)
Oh, Susan, really.

SUSAN slaps herself hard on the cheek.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

EVE'S FACE glows in the light of seventeen candles on a cake. She takes a deep breath and blows out the candles. All but one--a joke candle that relights.

JOSH laughs louder than anyone.

JOSH
Try again, try again.

EVE blows out the candle, it relights.

JOSH
Come on, you can do it.

BARBARA turns on the lights.

BARBARA
She'll hyperventilate--

JONATHAN plucks the joke candle from the cake and uses it to light a large, Cuban cigar.

EVE
(to Josh)
If I don't get my wish, you're gonna pay--

JONATHAN
You'll get your wish, you always do.

BARBARA hands EVE a cake slicer. As EVE slices...

JONATHAN
Hold on, we're missing someone here--

JONATHAN rises.

BARBARA
Oh, don't bring the dog in--

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

SUSAN sits on the bed, a textbook open, making notes in a spiral notebook.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
(booming through intercom)
Susan! Get down here please!

SUSAN nearly flies off the bed. She goes to the intercom.

SUSAN
Yes, sir.

INT. DINING ROOM

SUSAN, smiling uncomfortably, slides her chair to the table. JONATHAN pours glasses of red wine.

JONATHAN
This is quite a night. A Mouton '65 kind of night, eh? My daughter's birthday...and other surprises. So I think a toast is in order.

He hands SUSAN a glass of wine.

SUSAN
(smelling the wine)
I hope I don't like this too much...it's not the brand I'm likely to drink much in my life.

JONATHAN
The only thing you can be absolutely sure of in life is that you can't be absolutely sure of anything.

SUSAN looks at him as if he's just said something deep.

BARBARA
Everyone is having cake.

JONATHAN
Could you just...hold on. I'd like to make a toast.
(emotional pause, raises glass)
To the most precious thing in my life--

JONATHAN gazes lovingly at BARBARA.

JONATHAN
--To my Morgan.
(he breaks up)

BARBARA
That was terrible.

JONATHAN
Come on, it just came out, it was funny, you have to admit...well, okay. I have a serious toast.

BARBARA
(hitting spoon on glass)
Attention, everyone, this time it's serious, let's gear up emotionally, prepare to be deeply moved--

JONATHAN
Can I make my toast?

BARBARA
Fire away.

JONATHAN looks at her, trying to figure out if this brittleness is all in fun. She smiles, reassuring him.

JONATHAN
I make this toast...from my heart.
(to BARBARA)
I just...purely...love you.
(to JOSH)
I love you.
(to EVE)
I love you.

BARBARA drinks, her eyes meeting JONATHAN'S. The kids drink, not thinking this is such a great toast. SUSAN drinks after a pause which seems to separate her from the toast.

SUSAN
(loudly)
Mmm!

The moment is broken, eyes turn to SUSAN.

SUSAN
I always thought people were just paying for the labels with this stuff, but God!... Could I have some more, please?

EVE pokes a finger into her wine.

EVE
What's this?

JONATHAN
Looks like the key to your Honda--

EVE
(leaping up)
Daddy!

She hugs BARBARA, JOSH, SUSAN, then JONATHAN again, then runs for the door.

JONATHAN
(calls)
Don't drive it now..Eve? It's tricky to start.

The door slams, a car engine revs, tires squeal as she backs out.

JONATHAN
Who taught her to drive like that? I don't drive like that.

JOSH
Hey, Dad, guess what? I made the soccer team.

JONATHAN
Hey! Way to go!

JOSH
Susan helped me a lot with my footwork and ball handling.

SUSAN
Oh, a pointer here and there, not really worth a mention-- May I have a tiny bit more wine, please?

BARBARA
You'll never guess who else has some news. I'm officially a business. Banquets by Barbara. Tomorrow I have a meeting about catering a party--small, but Sally Quinn might be there.

JONATHAN
Well...fantastic. Does this mean I can stop working?
(kisses her)
What a night!

JOSH
What a night!

JONATHAN
At the risk of being a glutton for accomplishment--I've landed Jason Larrabee as a client for the firm.

No real reaction.

BARBARA
Who is he?

JONATHAN
I'll give you a copy of Forbes richest people in America and you can look him up--he's number 86.

JOSH
Hey, way to go, Dad.

BARBARA
That's wonderful, Jonathan.

SUSAN
Oh, I wish I had some good news.

JONATHAN
Have a little more wine, Susan.

SUSAN holds out her glass, feeling quite aglow.

SUSAN
Oh, wait! I have good news--I work for you! That calls for a toast, so here's to the Roses, one and all. It just makes me so happy and proud to serve such a wonderful family in such a happy house. Here's to you!

SUSAN belts down the wine.

INT. PRIVATE CLUB - NEW YORK - DAY

A man's club. JONATHAN and his law partner HEATH sit with JASON LARRABEE, a fit looking man in his early fifties.

LARRABEE
C D and W damn near cost me my company. The bank had already tendered the stock by the time they filed.

JONATHAN
It's not the first time their timing has been off. I think you'll be well served by our firm. Especially if the rumors around town are true.

LARRABEE
Well, there may be a senate confirmation hearing in my future.

HEATH
We can definitely be of help with that.

LARRABEE reaches into an empty bread basket. JONATHAN turns to attract a passing WAITER.

JONATHAN
Waiter--

As his hand goes up, Jonathan's face contorts in pain, his hand goes to his chest.

LARRABEE
Whatsa matter?

JONATHAN
Nothing. I'm fine.
(MORE)

JONATHAN
(continuing)
Regarding the senate confirmation, it wouldn't be a bad idea for us to have your personal asset-liability state---

Another wave of pain hits, his eyes bulge open, his shoulders hunch and contract.

HEATH
Jonathan--

JONATHAN
I'm fine.

LARRABEE
Have some water.

JONATHAN nods and sips some water.

JONATHAN
(clears his throat)
Last time I order sweetbreads for lunch. Now, where was I? Oh, yes--

JONATHAN'S eyes bulge open, his shoulders hunch and contract so he's in the identical position as moments ago.

WAITER
Can I get you more coffee. Mr. Larrabee? Or your guests anything more?

JONATHAN shakes his head no.

LARRABEE
(quietly)
Do you think you're having a heart attack?

JONATHAN vigorously shakes his head no. Another spasm of pain hits. He nods yes.

LARRABEE
(to waiter)
Call an ambulance.

WAITER
An ambulance...right away.

The WAITER hurries off.

HEATH
Hang on, Jonathan.

JONATHAN
Call my wife--

JONATHAN closes his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

JONATHAN, pale and moist, lies on a gurney. An ORDERLY wheels up a piece of electrical equipment.

ORDERLY
Where you want the defibrilator?

NURSE
Right here.

The NURSE takes Jonathan's blood pressure, writing numbers on a clipboard.

Another gurney, this one holding a LARGE MAN with a bloody shirt, is wheeled next to JONATHAN.

LARGE MAN
How's it goin'?

JONATHAN opens his eyes and looks at the bloody hill of a man next to him.

JONATHAN
You may be the only person I'm doing better than.

LARGE MAN
The wife stabbed me in the stomach.

A SMALL WOMAN with a bruised face and swollen lip approaches.

WOMAN
I'm tryin' to get a doctor for ya, baby.

LARGE MAN
(to Jonathan)
They always feel bad after.

A young, unshaven,long-haired kid in a white coat appears. He is DOCTOR BERG.

DOCTOR
Mr. Rose? I'm Doctor Berg. I'll be attending to you.
(to Nurse, taking clipboard)
How're his vital signs?

WOMAN
We were here first.

LARGE MAN
Take it easy, Midge, this guy's dyin', can't you see that?

JONATHAN
Did someone call my wife?

DOCTOR
I don't know.

JONATHAN contracts as another pain impales him.

JONATHAN
I want to write her a note...in case she doesn't get here in time.

The DOCTOR hands him the clipboard and a pen.

DOCTOR
Let's get him to CICU.

JONATHAN tries to write his note as the gurney jolts into motion. The shaking of the gurney plus the pain make the note both passionate and illegible. The gurney passes HEATH, who stands with a payphone receiver to his ear.

INT. ROSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The SOUND of a TELEPHONE RINGING. The living room looks very much the way BARBARA envisioned it. We focus on the beautiful objects which give meaning to Jonathan's life.

INT. STUDY.

The TELEPHONE CONTINUES RINGING. The ARMOIRE containing Jonathan's liquor collection, his empty Eames chair, a dark wood rent table. There is the SOUND of the KITCHEN DOOR slamming.

INT. ROSE KITCHEN

SUSAN, pulling BENNIE on a leash, runs to the phone.

SUSAN
Rose residence...Mrs. Rose is out at the moment, may I take a message?
(beat)
Oh no. No! Damn it,no! He can't! Damn it, no, no, no, please no.
(she starts to sob, then controls herself)
I'll give her the message.

BENNIE wraps the leash around her legs; she tries to unclip it from his collar. BENNIE CHOKES.

INT. CARDIAC INTENSIVE CARE - DAY

A stylus squiggles a record of Jonathan's heartbeat on a strip of graph paper oozing from a monitor.

JONATHAN finishes scribbling his note; the clipboard falls to the floor as another wave of pain hits.

The DOCTOR squints at the heart monitor oscilloscope as he listens with a stethoscope. He looks puzzled.

DOCTOR
(to Nurse)
Get me some pictures of him... upper G.I. with a barium swallow.

EXT. ECUADORAN EMBASSY GARDEN - DAY

An expensively dressed LATIN WOMAN walks with BARBARA through a small garden area.

BARBARA
If you were having more than thirty guests I'd suggest a buffet, but a sit down lunch is more elegant.

In the BACKGROUND an ASSISTANT runs from the embassy building toward them.

ASSISTANT
Perdonme, Senora. La Senora Rose ha recibido una llamada urgente.

LATIN WOMAN
An urgent phone call for you.

The ASSISTANT hands her a portable phone.

BARBARA
Hello?
(listens)
Oh my god. Oh my god.
I'm leaving now.
(starting to cry)
My husband's had a heart attack.

LATIN WOMAN
Ay, dios mio!

The LATIN WOMAN and the ASSISTANT offer her handkerchiefs. She instinctively takes the embroidered one and not the plain.

BARBARA
Thank you.

She is not crying, but she pulls at the handkerchief out of the wild and growing tension she feels. As she does so, she notices the design.

BARBARA
(continued)
What a lovely handkerchief. Hand embroidered. Oh, I have to go. I'll uh, wash this and send it back.

BARBARA rushes out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

JONATHAN winces as a NURSE rips a heart monitor sensor from his chest.

DOCTOR
The X-rays showed up an esophageal tear. Commonly known as a hiatal hernia.

He flips on the overhead lights, making the room suddenly bright, and holds up an X-ray.

DOCTOR
Right there. The pain symptoms are almost identical to angina. Spicy food, coffee, gas, stress--the nerve endings get irritated and well you know what it feels like. Not pleasant, but not fatal.

JONATHAN
It's not my heart? I'm not going to die?

DOCTOR
Not today.

The DOCTOR smiles and pats his shoulder.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

JONATHAN, dressed except for his jacket, drains a small bottle of hospital mouthwash, getting his money's worth.

He sits on the bed, brushes his jacket off, discovering a cigar he was saving for the end of lunch. He flips on the TV and lights the cigar. As he blows a thick plume of smoke toward the door he sees--

The DOORWAY filled with five of his LAW PARTNERS, their arms filled with flowers, books, candy in a heart shaped box.

JONATHAN
Oh, hi.

He puts the cigar in a water pitcher.

MCCULLOUGH
He knows how to enjoy a heart attack.

HEATH
Jonathan, what's the story.

JONATHAN
It was, uh, something else, not my heart--
(fans his chest with fingers)
A thing, a tear,...

HEATH
So basically you're okay?

JONATHAN
Uh, yes, basically. But if I'd known you guys were coming I'd have forced them to give me a heart attack.

JONATHAN and the PARTNERS chuckle. The PARTNERS regard their armloads of gifts.

HEATH
You need a ride back to Washington?

JONATHAN
No, no thanks. I have to stay here awhile and, uh, Barbara'll be picking me up.

EXT. HOSPITAL

The sidewalks are wet from a light rain that has fallen. JONATHAN stands alone on the sidewalk with his flowers around him, waiting, and hoping that Barbara will show up. After a long moment, he gathers his flowers and walks down the sidewalk.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - EXT. METROLINER - NIGHT

As it rattles along its megalopolis groove from Washington D.C.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

JONATHAN sits grimly, drink in hand, looking at his reflection in the window. The seat next to his is filled with his flowers and gifts.

INT. ROSE FOYER - NIGHT

JONATHAN enters, lets his flowers fall. Silence. The grandfather clock ticks. BENNIE bounds in, JONATHAN stoops to hug him.

JONATHAN
Where is everybody? Guess you're the only one who gives a damn about me in this family.

JONATHAN starts up the stairs, pauses, goes down and winds the clock.

INT. SHOWER

JONATHAN lets the water beat on his face.

INT. BEDROOM

JONATHAN, in a robe, leafs through some invoices from food markets to Barbara's business.

BARBARA enters and runs to him. He lets himself be embraced, then slowly relaxes and hugs her.

BARBARA
You don't know how happy I am to see you--

JONATHAN
Me, too. I thought this was it.

BARBARA
Oh, I didn't. I mean, a heart attack just isn't something that could happen to you.

JONATHAN
I got no big special heart. You didn't come to the hospital--

BARBARA
No, no, I--I called and it seemed like everything was under control so I didn't want to...disturb you.

JONATHAN studies her; she does her best to meet his gaze.

JONATHAN
Disturb me? I wasn't doing much... just dying.

BARBARA
(laughs)
You weren't dying. I called and they said--

JONATHAN
(interrupts)
Well, I thought I was dying! I wrote you a note in case you didn't arrive in time.

He hands a piece of folded paper to her. She unfolds it and studies it. Her brow furrows.

BARBARA
I can't read your handwriting.

JONATHAN
(snatches it back)
I was on a gurney being rushed to Intensive care in excruciating pain. It says: "My love..."
(his voice cracks with emotion)
(MORE)

JONATHAN
(continuing)
"By the time you...reh...roh... receive this, I may be gone."

JONATHAN holds back a sob and looks over the page at BARBARA, who listens placidly.

JONATHAN
"My life was fun...full... beyond my dreams. All I have and all I am I owe to you."

BARBARA nods.

JONATHAN
(continues, growing angry)
"You gave me courage to surpass what I know I am...strength to rise above..." I had a spasm here and can't make out the next line, but then it goes, "As I lie here feeling my life ebb away, I cling to your image. If I never see you again, I will take you with me to eternity. I cherish you. Love, Jonathan."

He lowers the paper. BARBARA sits dry eyed.

BARBARA
Boy, I really wish I'd come.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

JONATHAN, BARBARA, EVE, and JOSH eat dinner. SUSAN puts another serving plate on the table.

EVE
I can't believe you didn't call us at school, Mom.

BARBARA
I didn't see any point in alarming you until there was something to be alarmed about.

She looks to JONATHAN for support.

JONATHAN
Your mother didn't want to disturb anybody today.

EVE
You should've called us.

JOSH
Yeah.

SUSAN
I'm sure your mother didn't want to worry you needlessly. She handled this very cooly if you ask me, which you didn't but I thought I'd offer my viewpoint as a public service.

JONATHAN
The kids are right. We've always been a family that communicated. When something important happens, everyone should know about it. That's the rule.

BARBARA nods, chastened. THUNDER sounds, the lights flicker.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

RAIN falls. LIGHTENING flashes. The house is dark.

INT. BEDROOM

The room brightens with white light penetrating the curtains.

JONATHAN sleeps on his back, snoring on each inhale.

BARBARA lies awake, listening to this snoring which she has listened to for twenty years; snoring which once lulled her to sleep because it meant Jonathan was asleep and all was well with the world. She forks the first two fingers of her hand, (as if to jab him in the eyes) and INSERTS HER FINGERS IN HIS NOSTRILS.

JONATHAN gasps and lurches to a sitting position.

JONATHAN
What!

BARBARA
I've been thinking...

JONATHAN
What?

BARBARA
I've been thinking and I know why I didn't come to the hospital.

JONATHAN lies back down.

JONATHAN
Let's just forget today, okay?

BARBARA
When I first heard the news I was... stunned. I felt like this cold ball in my stomach. Have you ever felt that?

JONATHAN
Daily.

BARBARA
I managed to drive home. I packed some clothes...and that terrible thought that I kept trying to push out of my mind just stayed there, becoming more and more vivid, until I actually felt what it would be to not have you in my life...anymore. And I just got so scared--

JONATHAN frees a hand from the covers and pats her hand.

JONATHAN
Well you don't have to be scared anymore.

BARBARA
I got scared because I felt happy.

A pause, then the light on Jonathan's nightstand goes on. THUNDER SOUNDS.

JONATHAN
(sitting up)
You were happy I was dead?

BARBARA
I was happy to be free...like a weight had been lifted--

JONATHAN
So, so, how am I supposed to respond to this? Excuse me for living? Is that, uh, is that, uh--

BARBARA
I thought we should talk about it. I thought it was important.

He picks up his pillow and stands.

JONATHAN
I knew, I knew something was--I don't now if it was the stress of, of--or doing the house or your business, but you, you--
(shakes his head)
I'm not sleeping here and uh, maybe things'll look different to you in the morning.

JONATHAN EXITS, shutting the door hard. BARBARA lies on her side for a moment, then rolls across the bed and turns out his light, remaining sprawled across the bed.

INT. HALLWAY

JONATHAN, clutching his pillow, stands outside the door, sure that it will open and BARBARA will beg his forgiveness. After a long wait, putting an ear to the door, he stalks down the hall toward the guest room, enters, and closes the door.

INT. GUEST ROOM - EARLY MORNING

JONATHAN lies, hands behind his head, not having slept much. Leaden morning light glows through the curtains, which match the bed's ruffled canopy.

A KNOCK.

JONATHAN
(smugly)
Yes--

JOSH enters carrying schoolbooks. Jonathan's smugness fades.

JOSH
What's wrong?

JONATHAN beckons him over and puts an arm around him.

JONATHAN
Nothing's wrong.

JOSH
How come you slept in here?

JONATHAN
In here? Because...your mother and I...we...it's married stuff. You know.

JOSH smiles affectionately at how bad his father is at dismissing the issue.

JONATHAN
(reading his son's thoughts)
Okay, okay, I know.

He slaps JOSH on the behind. JOSH EXITS.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - MORNING

The MORGAN speeds in, angling into two spaces. JONATHAN drapes a car cover over his prize possession.

INT. LAW OFFICE CORRIDOR - MORNING

JONATHAN walks toward his office. His secretary, NANCY, has just arrived. She's in her late forties and has bags under her eyes. JONATHAN knows she lacks the luxurious life he provides for Barbara.

NANCY
I didn't expect you to be in, I heard--

JONATHAN
Did Barbara call?
(she shakes her head)
Just be nice to me today. No questions.

NANCY
Take my jelly doughnut. I'll get you coffee.

JONATHAN
No coffee.

NANCY
Tea?

JONATHAN
Maalox.

INT. JONATHAN'S OFFICE

Well furnished with collectibles and the best of technological gadgets. An ORCHID blooms in a corner. He puts a sad song on the compact disc player. He picks up a framed photo of BARBARA as he bites into the doughnut--RED JELLY globs out onto the photo, hitting her between the eyes. JONATHAN takes a tissue and wipes it off. He throws the tissue in the wastebasket. He throws the doughnut in the wastebasket. He throws the photo in the wastebasket.

EXT. ROSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

The MORGAN pulls in, catching Barbara's CAT in its headlights. BENNIE runs to greet him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

JONATHAN gazes into the refrigerator, which is filled with wrapped packages labeled for delivery to Barbara's clients. He opens the oven: THREE CAKES are rising. He lets the door slam shut. He opens a cupboard and takes out a box of crackers.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN fills a drinking glass with scotch and replaces the bottle in the ARMOIRE. He starts to sit in the Eames chair, then remembers something and EXITS.

INT. SUN ROOM

A glassed-in porch at the back of the house. JONATHAN holds his drink in one hand and a clear plastic watering can filled with blue liquid in the other. He fertilizes a dozen potted orchids, most of which are putting out flower spikes.

SUSAN appears in the doorway, holding a foil covered plate and a cup of tea. She wears a bathrobe. She sets down the plate and cup with shaking hands.

SUSAN
I saved some dinner for you, sir. The ovens were being used so I kept it under the electric blanket in my room.

JONATHAN
Thanks...I'm not very hungry.

SUSAN
Perhaps some tea. I brought it from England. It's soothing tea.

He drinks from his glass of scotch.

JONATHAN
I´m fine.

SUSAN
Are you?

JONATHAN
This is the mother of all these plants. Someone sent it as a housewarming gift. I read a book on orchids and found out you could keep dividing them... fascinating plants. They don´t bloom if they´re too comfortable. They need to be rootbound, and a cold spell that almost kills them really brings out the color. The masochists of the plant world. There´s a giant orchid that grows in Borneo that´s pollinated by flies...so in order to attract them it has the fragrance of rotting meat.

SUSAN
Oh, I think I once got a corsage made with one of those. Lovely but a definite last week´s mutton smell to it.

JONATHAN finally cracks a smile.

JONATHAN
Thanks for the tea and everything.

SUSAN
My pleasure, sir.

A LOUD SCREAM cuts the moment. JONATHAN and SUSAN hurry toward the sound. BENNIE stands on his hindlegs and eats the food off the plate.

INT. KITCHEN

BARBARA holds a cake in her potholder mittened hands. The center of the cake is sunken. The oven rack is pulled out, displaying similarly deformed cakes.

JONATHAN and SUSAN enter.

BARBARA
Who opened my oven?

JONATHAN
I did. I was looking for something to eat.

The impending fight halts because SUSAN is standing there.

SUSAN
Well...good night, missus, sir.

She heads up the servant stairs.

BARBARA
Two hours' work down the drain.

She dumps the cakes in the sink and begins cramming them down the garbage disposer.

JONATHAN
I guess you're not feeling any better today.

BARBARA
I have to have six cakes ready by ten tomorrow--

She turns on the garbage disposer. JONATHAN clicks it off.

JONATHAN
I'm not talking about the cakes. You know, you say what you said last night, you don't call, and, and, I didn't expect the first words out of your mouth would be about your damn cakes.

BARBARA turns the garbage disposer on again, shoving the cakes in.

JONATHAN
I told you never to do that, you could lose a finger--

She finishes shoving the cake down, turns off the disposer and holds up her hand, wiggling her fingers at him.

JONATHAN
Why are you acting this way? What's your problem?

BARBARA
(pause)
I want a divorce.

This should seem just as abrupt to JONATHAN as it does to us.

JONATHAN
You do not. You can't have one.

BARBARA
It isn't like marriage, it doesn't require mutual consent. I gave it a lot of thought and I really don't want to be married to you anymore.

JONATHAN
One day? You thought about it for a day?

BARBARA
A little longer than that.

JONATHAN
Is there someone else? Another man?

BARBARA
No.

JONATHAN
A woman?

BARBARA
You wish.

BARBARA begins gathering the ingredients for new cakes. JONATHAN slams an opera cupboard, it bounces open defying his anger.

JONATHAN
If anyone should be asking for a divorce it should be me! I was the one rushed to the hospital... My wife doesn't show up and then she tells me she wishes I had died--

BARBARA
Okay, okay, okay. Don't turn this into soap opera.

JONATHAN
Why would you want a divorce? Did I do something? Did I not do something?

BARBARA
I can't give you specifics, Jonathan.

JONATHAN makes a face, as if he can't believe her lack of logic and conciseness. This face is one specific. Barbara turns away, putting on an oven mitt to remove one more cake from the oven.

JONATHAN
Well, try--

BARBARA
I don't want to try. I don't want to be married to you. Can't you just accept that?

JONATHAN
No, I think I need--I think you owe me--after this many pretty damn good years of marriage--a reason.

BARBARA focuses on him; he stares at her, lips tight, head bobbing slightly.

BARBARA
Because...when I watch you eat...when I see you asleep...when I look at you...lately...I just want to smash your face in.

JONATHAN stands a moment as if he had been struck. Then suddenly he grabs the front of her shirt and pulls her nose to nose.

JONATHAN
Well go ahead then. Smash my face in. Go ahead! Go ah--

HER MITTENED HAND rockets from her side and catches him on the chin, lifting him and sending him reeling backward.

JONATHAN feels his front teeth, touches his lip. He takes a step toward her. BARBARA stands her ground.

JONATHAN
From now on I hit back.

He starts out.

JONATHAN
You better get yourself a good lawyer.

BARBARA
The best your money can buy.

JONATHAN exits. BARBARA exhales and leans against the counter, covers her eyes with her hand. She did it.

INT. HARRY THURMONT'S OFFICE - DAY

An office decorated to feel warm, like a hunting lodge, HARRY THURMONT sits behind a large desk; the light coming through a window behind him illuminates his mane of silver hair, which makes his tan look even deeper. On the wall behind him is a print of a male lion being speared.

THURMONT
Would you like some coffee while we wait?

JONATHAN seats himself in a leather wing chair. BARBARA sits in a matching chair a little distance away.

JONATHAN
Wait?

THURMONT
For your attorney.

JONATHAN
I'm representing myself.

THURMONT grins, amused and pleased. JONATHAN opens a briefcase on his lap.

JONATHAN
All right, Thurmont. Let's make this quick and clean.

THURMONT
That's always the hope.

JONATHAN
What does she want?

He glances at BARBARA then back to THURMONT, trying to be the attorney instead of the rejected husband.

THURMONT
Custody.

JONATHAN
Shared.

THURMONT
Standard agreement--summers, weekends--

JONATHAN
Fine. Child support--

THURMONT
To be determined from tax returns--

JONATHAN
I have copies. Alimony--

THURMONT
Barbara, against my advice, waives alimony.

JONATHAN looks at BARBARA, not sure if this is generosity or a trick.

BARBARA
My business is doing pretty well, I can support myself.

JONATHAN
Well, I'm a lucky guy.

THURMONT
Now, regarding the division of assets--

JONATHAN
This isn't a community property district, but I'm willing to give her half the appraised value on the property and half the market value of the liquid assets. That seems fair and simple.

JONATHAN makes a gesture to BARBARA, "It's generous of me." BARBARA looks to THURMONT.

THURMONT
It <u>is</u> simple.

JONATHAN
And fair.

THURMONT
Equal is not necessarily fair. Since you earned the money and made the investments, Barbara doesn't feel she's entitled to half the liquid assets. All she wants...is the house and its contents--excluding of course your personal effects, clothing, the Morgan autombile, your tools--

JONATHAN
Wait wait wait. You want the house?

THURMONT
She's willing to concede the liquid assets.

JONATHAN
There are no liquid assets! Everything's always gone into the house.

THURMONT
But didn't you tell her she was entitled to the house and more?

JONATHAN
What? Did I tell her what?

THURMONT takes a piece of paper from his file folder. He glances at BARBARA, who looks down at the table.

THURMONT
And I quote--"My love, by the time you receive this...blah blah blah...all I have and all I am, I owe to you."

JONATHAN rises, his face reddening from embarrassment and anger. He is no longer just an attorney. BARBARA continues looking at the table.

JONATHAN
You let him read that?

He snaps his briefcase shut on his tie.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
If this is a who-can-sink-lowest-fastest contest, you win. You win. You want the house?... you'll never get the house. And let me tell you something else... I - I - I - I...you....

JONATHAN slams out the door. Or tries to, but the door is equipped with an hydraulic closer.

BARBARA
Maybe I shouldn't have let you see that.

BARBARA raises her head.

THURMONT
Before this is over you'll wish it was all as pleasant as today.

EXT. STREET

JONATHAN walks to his office, gesturing angrily, thinking now of all he could have said. He stops at a corner and a hissed "Bitch" escapes, drawing a look from a professional looking woman next to him. Some Christmas decorations are going up.

INT. LAW OFFICE CORRIDOR

JONATHAN strides toward his office.

NANCY
I have messages--

JONATHAN
Who's the best divorce lawyer in Washington?

NANCY
Harry Thurmont.

JONATHAN
Shut up. Who else? Who's tough? Who's a killer?

EXT. WASHINGTON BAR - NIGHT

A businessman's bar where one can get a double scotch and maybe an unforgettable venereal disease.

INT. WASHINGTON BAR

JONATHAN has had a few drinks. He sits at the bar.

JONATHAN
How can men ever respect women? I mean, we're talking about an entirely different species--a species with only two driving ambitions...to exploit men and to amass an enormous number of shoes.

Next to him is a pudgy, cherubic man, GARY CHERNISH. His lawyer.

GARY
You can't underestimate her as an opponent...women are a lot meaner than we give them credit for.

JONATHAN
She hit me in the kitchen, nearly took out my front teeth...

GARY
Exactly my point. From now on we must never be taken off guard. I'm going to suggest something rather radical, but in view of your wife's demands, I want you to consider it. Carefully.

JONATHAN
What is it?

GARY takes a swallow of beer.

GARY
Title 16-904 Section C.

JONATHAN
Civil code--

GARY
The law was put on the books to help indigent couples--that's far from you, but--it allows a husband and wife to live under the same roof during a divorce. In separate bedrooms of course.

JONATHAN
I don't have to move out?

GARY
A judge may still ultimately award her the house, but your staying could help your case.

JONATHAN
(brightening)
Sure! It'll show my commitment. And maybe she won't be so comfortable with me there. Maybe she'll move out! Maybe she'll crack.

GARY
Maybe this isn't a good idea.

JONATHAN
No, no, it's a great idea. It's just that hearing I didn't have to leave, I got a little excited. But I'll be fine. Believe me, I want to win.

GARY
There is no winning, only degrees of losing.

JONATHAN
Well, I'll do what I have to to lose least.

INT. ROSE HALLWAY

JONATHAN enters from the master bedroom, his arms piled with his clothing. He heads for the GUEST ROOM at the other end of the hall, passing BARBARA, who sits on the stairs.

BARBARA
This is the stupidest thing you have ever done in your life.

JONATHAN
Second stupidest!

BARBARA
You can't stay here.

He continues into the GUEST ROOM and kicks the door shut behind him.

BARBARA sits on the stairs, stewing. A CHRISTMAS TUNE begins to play over.

EXT ROSE HOUSE - EVENING

Christmas decorations adorn the neighboring houses.

A CHRISTMAS TREE stands in the window of the Rose house.

INT. ROSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

EVE, SUSAN, JONATHAN, and BARBARA decorate the tree. The happy CHRISTMAS MUSIC counterpoints the hostile atmosphere created by JONATHAN and BARBARA, who make every effort to avoid the least contact as they adorn the tree: BARBARA hangs ornaments; JONATHAN strings lights.

INT. STUDY

JOSH looks at the scene from the STUDY. He quietly opens the armoire and pours a healthy slug of scotch into his cup of egg nog. As he starts back toward the living room it is fairly evident this is not his first trip to the armoire tonight.

INT. LIVING ROOM

JONATHAN climbs a ladder to place the final light string. He tries to pogo stick the ladder as he did in Nantucket but has lost his touch.

BARBARA bumps the ladder; JONATHAN almost loses his balance.

BARBARA
More egg nog anyone?

JOSH enters and goes to steady the ladder--or more accurately, uses the ladder to steady himself.

JOSH
You're doin' a great job there, Dad.

EVE pulls an antique star from a box of decorations. Some decorations are old--from their newlywed apartment.

EVE
Okay, mom, you're on.

EVE pushes BARBARA to the ladder as JONATHAN climbs down.

JONATHAN
(sotto to JOSH)
No more drinking.

SUSAN
My, this is really--I haven't had a Christmas like this since--ever.

BARBARA places the star atop the tree. JONATHAN nods, approving this star.

EVE turns out the lights. The room is dark for a long moment. Then--

The TREE LIGHTS UP, bathing the room in a warm glow. The tinsel sparkles, the ornaments glitter. It's magic. JONATHAN and BARBARA look at the tree, then at each other. Memories of past Christmases and past happiness flicker through their minds. The LIGHTS ALSO FLICKER. And go out. Then go on again. Then flicker.

BARBARA turns on the lights.

BARBARA
It's a short. I said something was wrong with the lights last year--I don't think we should--

JONATHAN kneels to examine a light string.

JONATHAN
It's not a short. The lights just need to warm up. I've been doing this long enough. And you can't hang the damn ornaments so they touch the sockets.

He pulls some ornaments off the tree.

BARBARA exits.

JONATHAN rises and looks at the trio of sad faces.

JONATHAN
Hey, come on...it's Christmas. Let's get a little festive here.

EVE
I have to go out.

JOSH
I have stuff to do in my room.

EVE and JOSH exit, leaving SUSAN and JONATHAN alone.

JONATHAN
Excuse me.

JONATHAN exits.

SUSAN
(a long moment, then sings with feeling)
Oh, you better not cry you better not pout you better not hmph I'm telling you why, Santa Claus is dead.

SUSAN exits.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

The TREE glows in the living room window.

In a CAR PARKED in front, EVE makes out with a TEENAGE BOY.

The CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS FLICKER, go out, flicker on again, flicker out. The CHRISTMAS TREE begins to BURN. A SMOKE ALARM SOUNDS.

EVE
Oh, god, my house is on fire!

TEENAGE BOY
Mine, too.

EVE opens the car door.

INT. HALLWAY

JONATHAN opens his door and charges down, followed by BARBARA, SUSAN, and JOSH.

INT. LIVING ROOM

EVE and the TEENAGE BOY beat at the fire with their coats.

JONATHAN runs past them to--

INT. KITCHEN

JONATHAN grabs a fire extinguisher. The house is filling with smoke.

INT. LIVING ROOM

JONATHAN charges in with the extinguisher.

JONATHAN
Everyone get back!

He unleashes a stream of foam, which first hits a tapestry on the wall, then the oriental rug, then the tree.

JONATHAN
Okay, okay, everyone calm down. It's out. Thank god I was home. The whole place could've burned down.

SUSAN
Yes. I'll, uh, I'll get a sponge and start cleaning up. Or a shovel.

BARBARA looks at the damage he caused. She stares balefully at JONATHAN.

JONATHAN
(answering her accusing look)
It might not've been the lights.

She stares malevolently at him.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

We are close on JONATHAN'S FACE, illuminated by the light coming from the movie screen. Over this we HEAR a phone conversation:

JONATHAN'S VOICE
She thinks I did it on purpose. She blames me in front of the kids for ruining Christmas.

GARY'S VOICE
Stay calm, Jonathan, stay calm. Do something to take your mind off it. Go see a movie.

The SOUND from the movie cuts in suddenly. Gunfire and screams. On the SCREEN is a segment from COMMANDO in which Schwartzenegger is venting anger in a big way. Involuntary grunts of approval come from JONATHAN as the action continues.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The silence is broken by the SOUND of the MORGAN ENGINE REVVING. The MORGAN rounds a corner in a four wheel drift. It flashes by, giving us but a glimpse of JONATHAN looking steely eyed behind the wheel.

INT. ROSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

JOSH drops some ice cubes into a glass of scotch. Hearing the MORGAN pull in, he quickly stashes the glass in the refrigerator.

JONATHAN enters with BENNIE nuzzling his leg.

JONATHAN
Josh, you're still up?

JOSH
Looks that way.

JOSH starts out.

JONATHAN
Anything good to eat here?

JONATHAN opens the refrigerator. JOSH tenses.

JOSH
It's mostly stuff for mom's business. There's some extra crab cakes from the party she's doing tonight.

JONATHAN closes the refrigerator.

JONATHAN
You doing okay? Stupid question, huh?

JOSH
I feel really mad at you. But I don't know if I really feel mad at you.

JONATHAN
(not understanding)
Yeah--I...I....

JOSH
You don't know what I mean, do you?
(Jonathan shakes his head)
It's like, I know how I'm supposed to feel, so I think I'm maybe acting like I feel that way. Then I think, well, if I'm only acting like I'm mad, how do I really feel? And I guess I don't feel anything. Just a big hole.

JONATHAN
Well, uh, I think maybe you have to let your anger out. Because if you keep it inside, you'll have ulcers by the time you're a junior. So, it's just the two of us, and I think you should...let loose. Take a swing at me if you feel like.

JOSH looks at his father, raises his hands, and embraces him in a strong hug.

JOSH
(after a long moment)
I didn't do so great, did I?

JONATHAN
(choked with emotion)
It's...it's a good start.

JONATHAN
(breaking and exiting)
Goodnight, Dad.

JOSH EXITS. JONATHAN stands a moment, then opens the refrigerator and takes out the glass of scotch JOSH stashed. He takes a long drink.

JONATHAN exits and we follow him through the DINING ROOM to the ENTRY, where he winds the clock, then walks toward--

INT. SUN ROOM

JONATHAN enters and picks up the watering can. He turns to the orchids and finds them all wilting. He lifts the leaves, feeling the life gone from them. The flower stalks droop. He waters the soil, hoping to revive his plants. He dips his finger into the soil and smells it.

INT. KITCHEN

JONATHAN takes the fire extinguisher and smells the nozzle. He presses the trigger and foam squirts out on his face. Not much foam. He smells it, then heads down into the basement.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM (Barbara's bedroom)

The closet door is open slightly. The light from the closet shafts into the dark room. We HEAR the SOUND of SAWING.

INT. CLOSET

JONATHAN kneels on the floor, sawing something with a crosscut saw. He finishes, stands, and places ONE CHARLES JORDAN high heel on a shelf next to its mate. The shoes, however, are no longer identical: one sits about two inches lower than the other, its heel having been cut in half. JONATHAN smiles as he looks down the shelf filled with pairs of shoes, all in the same condition. He bends to scrape together a vast number of heel stumps which he puts in a plastic garbage bag. He stands and turns out the closet light.

INT. JONATHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dark, quiet. JONATHAN lies, hands behind his head, a smirk on his face. He hears the sound of Barbara on the stairs, hears her footsteps moving down the hall, hears her door open and close. He waits. he hears a tortured WAIL. JONATHAN chuckles, closes his eyes, and rolls over to sleep.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - DAY

A peaceful Saturday. We hear the sound of an ELECTRIC DRILL.

INT. JONATHAN'S ROOM - DAY

JONATHAN awakes, trying to ascertain the source of the noise. He gets out of bed.

INT. HALLWAY

JONATHAN opens his door and looks down the hallway to see a 60 YEAR OLD MAN crouched outside the door to Barbara's bedroom.

JONATHAN
(approaching)
What're you doing? Who are you? I said what're you doing? You're in my house and I demand to know what you're doing. Tell me!

The MAN silently goes about his work of putting a deadbolt lock in the door.

The DOOR OPENS. BARBARA appears, wearing a businesslike skirt and HIGHTOP SNEAKERS.

60 YEAR OLD MAN
I didn't tell him nothin', ma'am.

JONATHAN
What's uh, what's--

BARBARA
(to MAN)
I'll take one key now. When you finish please lock the door. I'll come by your shop for the duplicate.

She starts for the stairs.

JONATHAN
This is a little much, isn't it?

The 60 YEAR OLD MAN continues to work. JONATHAN goes after BARBARA.

INT. STAIRWAY

JONATHAN
You're going a little far with the lock and-and..

BARBARA
You mutilated forty seven pairs of shoes--

JONATHAN
Well sure I did, because I was furious about what you did to my orchids.

BARBARA
I couldn't help myself. But that was a quick "psssh." This was premeditated brutality.

BARBARA opens the valise, displaying the shoes.

JONATHAN
Look, rather than argue about who did what, I'd like to try to work things out. Because time is passing and--

BARBARA
I'd like to work things out, too, Jonathan!

JONATHAN
Okay, then.

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN
(continuing)
I've given this a lot of consideration and I think I came up with someting fair and I think you'll think it's fair and we'll both be a lot better off.

INT. DINING ROOM

BARBARA sits on the edge of the table.

BARBARA
Okay. But could you make it fast, I have a meeting.

JONATHAN
It's taken me awhile to accept that we're actually getting this divorce but I have accepted it.

BARBARA
Thanks.

JONATHAN
If we leave the settlement to the lawyers, we'll be lucky to end up with the clothes on our backs. Now, I understand your point of view--you invested twenty years of your life helping create what we have--had. And that's worth a lot. How much exactly? Well, let's put a value on it. Susan does pretty much what you do--

BARBARA starts to go.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
Okay, okay, okay. She doesn't do half what you do.

BARBARA stops, hearing him out.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
So let's take her salary--two hundred a week--and <u>triple</u> it...

JONATHAN smiles,waiting for her expression of gratitude. She stares.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
That's six hundred times fifty two weeks...thirty one thousand two hundred. Times twenty years. That's six hundred twenty four thousand dollars.

He wiggles his eyebrows at her. Her expression is impossible to read.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
I'll give you that in cash. Not all at once, but as fast as I can--maybe in six or seven years. I mean, there's no bank account to speak of--a lot of guys squirrel away money but every cent I made was ours so it won't be easy--it'll be hard as hell is what it'll be--to come up with that kind of money. But I'll do it.

BARBARA
I want the house and everything in it.

JONATHAN
(yells)
You're not getting it!

INT. KITCHEN

SUSAN cooks breakfast for JOSH and EVE, who sit at the kitchen table. They respond to the growing volume and venom of their parents' voices.

INT. DINING ROOM

JONATHAN
You owe me. You got a lot more out of knowing me than I got out of knowing you. I taught you about antiques, architecture, gourmet food. You weren't even multi-orgasmic before you met me, were you?

BARBARA
My god, do I have to keep on reassuring you sexually even when we disgust each other?

SUSAN half enters through the kitchen door.

SUSAN
Sorry to interrupt but Josh and Eve are having breakfast and I was wondering if I could fix either of you something.

JONATHAN
No, thank you.

BARBARA
I found this house, I bought most of the things in it--

JONATHAN
With my money. And not most--

SUSAN
Nothing for you either, missus?

BARBARA
I'm going.

JONATHAN
So you're rejecting my offer?

BARBARA EXITS.

JONATHAN
(calls)
At least I'm trying to come up with solutions?

JONATHAN shakes his head and makes a gesture of futility directly to SUSAN, who is moved to answer with an almost imperceptible shrug. They are somehow closer for having gestured across class lines.

INT. GARY CHERNISH'S OFFICE - DAY

Cluttered and comfortable. JONATHAN lounges on a couch.

JONATHAN
It's gotten pretty bad. Worse than I ever imagined. Worse than you could imagine. It's horrible
(MORE)

JONATHAN
(continuing)
But you know... parts of it are kinda fun.

JONATHAN almost giggles.

GARY
What parts?

JONATHAN
Well--this goes no farther than this room, right? Privileged communication--

GARY nods.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
She was catering this fancy luncheon and I, I took this pate she made--she's famous for her pate--and scooped it out, and replaced it with cat food.

JONATHAN laughs. GARY just looks at him.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
She actually served cat food to the Junior League! From what I heard, it was not their favorite brand. And you know what she did?

GARY
What?

JONATHAN
She came to my office and dumped the cat food all over my desk. Didn't even embarrass me. So round one, huh?

He starts to give GARY a "high five". GARY just sits there.

GARY
This isn't going to help us. I think you and she are going to have to somehow establish some ground rules.

JONATHAN
We have. Look.

JONATHAN goes to Gary's desk and unrolls a BLUEPRINT of the house.

JONATHAN
See, the red areas are her territory... striped areas are mine... green areas are neutral. Front door is mine, side door is hers--

GARY
This...seems rational to you both?

JONATHAN smiles.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - DAY

A nice, sunny day. The house looks beautiful, the trees have leaves.

EVE'S VOICE
Because I don't even know you... How did you get my number?... Oh, uh huh, right, sure.

She laughs.

INT. HALLWAY

EVE sits cross-legged on the floor next to the heavy oak phone stand. She's flirting on the phone.

EVE
(into phone)
Because I don't want you coming by my house... Yeah, maybe. I'll meet you. How will I recognize you?

SUSAN comes out of a bedroom, having changed the linens.

EVE
(into phone)
I gotta go. I said maybe. Bye.

She hangs up.

SUSAN
It must be wonderful to have so many many many many admirers. Did you get this one's name?

EVE
What does that mean?

SUSAN
You have too much going for you to spread youself so thickly over the young male population of Washington. You don't have to be so...available.

EVE starts toward her room.

EVE
Yeah, well, you don't know what it's like being fat in the eighties.

SUSAN
You're not fat--

EVE goes into her room and closes the door; SUSAN holds it open, enters, then closes it.

INT. EVE'S ROOM

SUSAN
You're fat but I'm not? Okay, stand here.

SUSAN positions Eve in front of a mirror. SUSAN hoists her own blouse and grabs a handful of flesh at her side.

SUSAN
Now, let's see what you've got. Come on, hippo girl, show me your fat.

EVE turns away. SUSAN pulls up Eve's blouse. EVE reluctantly pinches a thin fold of skin. They stare into the mirror, each holding her own flesh. SUSAN realizes she's holding some flesh.

INT. HALLWAY

SUSAN comes out of Eve's Room, looking down and squeezing the fat at her sides.

SUSAN
(muttering)
Susan, you fat pig.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

The houses on either side are dark except for porch lights and night lights. In the distance a car burglar alarm sounds then stops. Dogs bark.

BENNIE'S BARK comes from inside the Rose House, which is also dark except for a light in the window of the STUDY and a pale glow coming from a television in BARBARA'S ROOM.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN sits at an antique secretaire, going through bills. A single lamp provides light.

JONATHAN
(to Bennie)
Bennie, ssh!

An ELECTRIC BILL - CLOSE UP. JONATHAN circles the charge, "$653.29" and writes: "Barbara--I won't pay your business overhead." He starts to write "Love," but gets as far as "Lo" then writes "Jonathan" over it.

JONATHAN rubs his eyes with thumb and forefinger. He takes a gulp of scotch and stares, exhausted and sad.

SUSAN, dressed in a terrycloth robe appears in the doorway, a glass of milk in her hand. She considers whether to say something.

SUSAN
Can I get you anything?

JONATHAN jerks his head toward her, startled.

JONATHAN
What? Oh, no, Susan, no, I...couldn't sleep so rather than lie there--

SUSAN
Yes, I can't stand to lie there. Something happens to the brain. I always get right up.
(pause)
Can I get you some warm milk?

JONATHAN
Umm...no. You wouldn't have any Dalmane? Ativan? Melloril?

She shakes her head.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
That's okay. I don't need it.

INT. BARBARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bottle of pills is on the nightstand. BARBARA lies in bed, eyes open. Something is happening to her brain.

A quiet RAP on the door brings BARBARA to her feet. She unlocks the door and opens it as far as the safety latch allows. SUSAN'S smiling face appears.

SUSAN
Sorry to disturb you, but I was wondering if I could borrow a sleeping pill.

BARBARA
It's for Jonathan, isn't it?

SUSAN
No.
(blurting)
It is! He didn't feel he could ask you. He didn't want me to, but--he's really exhausted.

BARBARA
Oh my... it's nice to see somebody still caring for somebody in this house.
(pause)
Goodnight.

BARBARA closes the door. She stands there a moment, then slowly and silently opens the door a crack and peers out.

BARBARA'S POV

SUSAN goes to the stairs. JONATHAN meets her at the top. She gives him the news. He sits on the top step. SUSAN tentatively massages his shoulders.

BARBARA
(strongly, loud, and friendly)
Hey, hey, hey.

JONATHAN and SUSAN look at her.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A normal day outside the building which houses Thurmont's law practice.

INT. THURMONT'S OFFICE

THURMONT sits on a leather couch beside BARBARA.

BARBARA
What if he's having an affair? With, let's say, the children's au pair.

THURMONT
Is he?

BARBARA
First tell me what would happen. Would the judge order him out of the house?

THURMONT
Sure. If you could prove it. Is he having an affair?

BARBARA
Well, let's hope so.

EXT. ROSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

JOSH throws a dufflebag in the back of the WAGONEER. SUSAN hands EVE a picnic basket and hugs her. BARBARA starts the engine.

BARBARA
We'll be back on Monday. If you need me, you have my mother's number.

SUSAN
If it's all right with you, I may go into Washington for the weekend.

BARBARA
(knowing what she really means)
Good idea. Try to have some fun.

EVE and JOSH shout goodbyes as the WAGONEER backs out. SUSAN waves, then goes into the house through the side door.

EXT. STREET

The WAGONEER stops. A car, a late model DODGE, is partially blocking the driveway. BARBARA gets out and walks to the car.

BARBARA
Excuse me--

A man, DON, sits reading a paper. He smiles at BARBARA.

BARBARA
(continuing)
Don't you think you'd better park somewhere else?

DON
Nah, people never notice. I know what I'm doing.

BARBARA
You're blocking the driveway.

DON
Ah.
(he starts the engine)
I'll pull up.

BARBARA
They're alone in the house now.

DON nods; the car humps as he puts it in gear, then pulls up. BARBARA gets back in the WAGONEER.

The WAGONEER backs into the street and roars away.

INT. DON'S DODGE

DON rolls down the passenger side window and extends a long pole (a directional microphone) toward the house. He puts airline style headphones on, humming to himself.

EXT. STREET

A CHILD runs down the block a distance away. Her MOTHER SHOUTS:

MOTHER
(shouting)
Chloe, come back here!

INT. DON'S DODGE

DON reacts in intense pain to the greatly amplified sound of the Mother's voice. He tears off the headphones, opening his mouth to clear his traumatized ears.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN lies on the floor, his head behind a cabinet. BENNIE lies near him.

SUSAN appears in the doorway. She is dressed to leave.

SUSAN
Mr. Rose? Are you--

JONATHAN sits up.

JONATHAN
Huh? Oh, I'm running some speaker wire. It's my stereo, might as well be in my study.

SUSAN is wearing a modestly short skirt, but from his angle his look makes her blush..

SUSAN
Right. Well, if you don't need me, I'm off to see the sights in Washington.

JONATHAN
I'll drive you.

SUSAN
Oh, no, I can take the bus.

She notices a coffee cup on the table.

SUSAN
Before I leave can I get you more coffee?
(picks up cup)
Oh, it's not coffee--

JONATHAN stands.

JONATHAN
No...nothing quite as pathetic as drinking warm scotch alone.

He takes the cup from her hand. Their eyes meet.

JONATHAN
You should go. It probably isn't wise for you to be here considering the state I'm in.

SUSAN
You look...terribly sad. Is that the state you mean?

JONATHAN
I smell flowers, do you smell flowers?

SUSAN
No. Oh, it must be me. A new shampoo.

JONATHAN leans to smell her hair. Her voice trembles.

SUSAN
(continuing)
The advertisements say it contains flower squeezings or something.

JONATHAN inhales deeply the scent of her hair, burying his nose in it.

SUSAN
But who...who knows what to believe these days. You seem to like it though.

JONATHAN smells down her hair to her neck and kisses her neck.

SUSAN
(moving away with a shiver)
I really should go.

JONATHAN
(a torrent of apology)
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I don't know--

SUSAN
No, no, please--

JONATHAN
I tried to stop myself. I'm trying again right now.

SUSAN gives a little moan at his classy approach.

INT. DODGE

DON reacts to the voices coming from the headphones.

SUSAN'S VOICE
I should write the company and tell them the effect the shampoo has on men.

JONATHAN'S VOICE
It isn't the shampoo.

DON picks up a video tape camera and checks the cassette.

SUSAN'S VOICE
Oh, what are we going to do?

DON opens the car door and gets out.

INT. WINE CELLAR

JONATHAN carefully removes a bottle of wine from a rack.

JONATHAN
It's my favorite wine. My last bottle of it. '62 Cabernet Sauvignon.

SUSAN shivers in the cold cellar.

SUSAN
Oh, it's from California.

JONATHAN
It's better than practically all the French stuff.

SUSAN
(excited, remembering the last wine)
Really?!

INT. KITCHEN

The door quietly opens and DON enters. BENNIE sits in the middle of the floor, watching him. DON walks past, BENNIE follows him.

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN and SUSAN walk up the stairs. Two glasses clink against the bottle.

INT. DINING ROOM/STUDY

DON moves silently through with BENNIE at his heels. He bends to retrieve an AUDIO BUG from under a table in the STUDY. BENNIE cooses him. He shoves him away.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

SUSAN tries not to be obvious about putting a photograph of her parents in a drawer. JONATHAN opens the bottle of wine.

JONATHAN
We have to allow some breathing time.

SUSAN
Yes.

She takes some deep breaths. JONATHAN approaches her and kisses her on the lips. An involuntary MOAN escapes her. JONATHAN, inflamed by this, begins using his two hands to gather her skirt up, bunching up the material on both sides.

SUSAN
(breathless)
Is this right, is this right what we're doing?

JONATHAN
It's right it's right it's right.

SUSAN
I've never done either of these.

JONATHAN
Either of what?

SUSAN
--Made love to an employer. Or to a married man. Or to a tall man for that matter.

INT. HALLWAY

DON slinks along the wall, accompanied by BENNIE. He slowly opens the last door in the hallway, his camera ready. The room is empty. DON looks at the stairway leading to Susan's room.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

SUSAN sits on the edge of the bed. JONATHAN kneels in front of her, kissing her knees.

SUSAN
I'm sorry, I don't mean to act like a penis teaser.

JONATHAN
No, no, I understand.

SUSAN
You do? You're so terrific.

JONATHAN
Let's have some wine.

He kneewalks to the nightstand and pours the wine quickly, then kneewalks back to her, swirling the wine in the glasses.

JONATHAN
This speeds up the breathing process so we can drink it now.

SUSAN
How is it that you know so much?

JONATHAN
'Cause my father envied people who knew these things. Here's to us.

SUSAN
(holding up glass)
Yes, well, to everybody...including us.

They clink glasses, drink, and... both spit out the wine.

JONATHAN
Vinegar!

JONATHAN holds up the cork and peers at it.

JONATHAN
She took a hypodermic needle and put vinegar in my wine.

SUSAN
It ruined the taste.

SUSAN points to the doorknob, which is slowly turning. JONATHAN rises and yanks open the door, saying--

JONATHAN
You bitch!

DON is standing there with his camera on his shoulder.

DON
Listen, I'll come back.

INT. HALLWAY

DON sprints for the stairs. JONATHAN raises the bottle like a club and the red vinegar runs down his arm.

INT. STAIRWAY

DON motors down the stairs, JONATHAN trips and slides down the curving staircase on his stomach. DON fumbles with the front door lock, but gets it and dashes out. JONATHAN picks himself up and pursues.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE

DON leaps in his van as JONATHAN runs out, stops, makes a sharp turn and runs toward the driveway.

INT. VAN

DON fumbles with his keys.

INT. GARAGE

JONATHAN leaps into the MORGAN and starts it.

INT. VAN

DON starts the van.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

JONATHAN rams the gearshift into reverse. The MORGAN backs up at speed. The CAT, BARBARA'S CAT, dashes across the driveway. Well, not all the way across the driveway.

INT. MORGAN

The screech of the tires is augmented by the screech of the CAT. JONATHAN brakes to a stop and squeezes his eyes shut. It's not his day. Or the cat's.

FADE OUT:

EXT. ROSE BACKYARD - NIGHT

BARBARA'S VOICE
(high, childlike)
Here kitty kitty kitty kitty kitty.

BARBARA scans the backyard. She turns and looks up at the lighted windows of the house. Her face looks ominous in the chiaroscuro light.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

SUSAN packs her clothes in a large suitcase.

SUSAN
Don't look at me like that. I was never really like an au pair to you in the first place. I mean, you're too old to need someone like me.

JOSH and EVE sit on the floor looking abject.

SUSAN
I can take a dorm room over at the college. We can still talk. It's just too crazy here, you see. Say something, will you?

After a long moment.

EVE
You're abandoning us to our parents.

SUSAN
They're your mum and dad. They're fine people. They're just a little--

JOSH
Nuts.

SUSAN
They're not nuts. I can't stay!

INT. BASEMENT

BARBARA moves down the basement stairs, slowly, deliberately. She crosses to the sauna door and pulls it open.

INT. SAUNA

JONATHAN, dripping with sweat, opens his eyes.

BARBARA
What did you do with my cat?

JONATHAN
I'm taking a sauna. Maybe you should, too. You sound tense.

BARBARA
I know something happened, and instead of playing this game--

JONATHAN
You killed your cat, Barbara, with your stupid scheme. I chased that detective out of the house, he got in his car, the cat ran across the street--

BARBARA nods, holds up a hand, wanting to hear no more. She closes the door. Jonathan relaxes a bit.

INT. BASEMENT

BARBARA goes to the workshop, takes a small chisel from a set hanging on the wall, returns to the sauna door, and plunges the chisel into the doorjamb. She starts for the stairs.

INT. SAUNA

JONATHAN gets up and pushes against the door. An instant of panic. He shoulders open the door. The chisel falls.

JONATHAN
Aw, come on, Barbara. Is this supposed to scare me?

He shakes his head and goes back in-- a matador turning his back on the bull.

INT. BASEMENT

BARBARA picks up the small chisel. Returns it to the workbench. Picks up a LARGE CHISEL and a MALLET. With three heavy blows she sinks the chisel in the doorframe. She waits. JONATHAN, inside, tries to shoulder open the door. It doesn't budge.

JONATHAN
(peering through small window)
This isn't a good idea.

BARBARA
I can't help it, darling. I just hate you so much.

BARBARA turns up the temperature setting and smashes the timer with the mallet. She starts up the stairs.

INT. SAUNA

JONATHAN pounds on the door.

JONATHAN
Okay, Barbara, you're really in trouble now.

He sits on a bench, then hurls himself at the door with no effect.

INT. KITCHEN

Through the window of the oven a duck can be seen browning. BARBARA opens the door and bastes it. The juice sizzles.

SUSAN
Mrs. Rose--

BARBARA, whirls, startled. Calms herself instantly.

BARBARA
Yes, Susan?

SUSAN
I'd like to stay on if that's all right with you. I know I said I had to leave, but the kids and I talked and--

BARBARA
Fine, good to have you back.

SUSAN
Are you making fun of me?

BARBARA
No. I think things happened we're all sorry for. But that's behind us.

SUSAN studies her, and then believes her.

SUSAN
I'm glad to hear that. Because I actually do feel everything is going to be okay.

BARBARA
I do too. I figure I'm about twenty minutes away from feeling a whole lot better.
(to herself)
I shouldn't make a joke of it.

SUSAN
(a little confused)
Well, good then. Shall I tell Eve and Josh to come down for dinner?

BARBARA
Eve and Josh--
(makes a pained face)
No, not yet. They can stay upstairs for awhile longer. Tell them that, will you? Thanks.

SUSAN exits up the servant stairs, giving BARBARA a regardant glance.

INT. SAUNA

JONATHAN lies on the floor, motionless. There is the SOUND of pounding outside the door, but it does not cause him to stir.

INT. BASEMENT

The mallet knocks the chisel from the doorframe. The door is opened.

INT. SAUNA

BARBARA stands in the doorway, mallet in hand, looking down at the prone, pink meat that is JONATHAN. She leans down and taps him on the shoulder. She blows on his back. He groans and opens an eye.

BARBARA
Jonathan, we have to stop thinking just of ourselves.

JONATHAN
(mumbles)
You practically killed me.

BARBARA
(indignant)
You killed my ca-at!
(calm)
Let's not argue. I want to resolve this once and for all. So lie here, gather your strength, then pack and leave.

BARBARA backs out, closes the door. JONATHAN weakly pushes against it; it doesn't open. A moment, then the door opens.

BARBARA
Shall I leave this open?

BARBARA turns and walks up the stairs.

INT. JONATHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BENNIE looks attentively at JONATHAN, who gulps orange juice from a cardboard carton. He pours some vodka into the container, swirls it, and drinks again.

JONATHAN
She doesn't scare me.

BENNIE cocks his head.

JONATHAN
She doesn't. I have the superior intellect, I outweigh her by thirty pounds--twenty-five now probably. So what are we scared of?

MR. MARSHALL'S VOICE
Frankly, I'm concerned about you, Jonathan.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

The building in which Jonathan's office is located.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
You're concerned about me?

INT. JONATHAN'S OFFICE

MR. MARSHALL stands inside the doorway. He has aged considerably from when we last saw him at the dinner party in Jonathan and Barbara's apartment.

MR. MARSHALL
You look haggard.

JONATHAN smiles and feels his face.

JONATHAN
It's just that I haven't been in the sun much. Actually I thought I might take some time off after the Larrabee confirmation hearing.

MR. MARSHALL
Why don't you take some time off before? It's important to the firm that it come off without a hitch. I want you at your best.

JONATHAN smoothes back his hair and smiles confidently.

JONATHAN
I'm at my best now. I won't let you down.

EXT. ROSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

JONATHAN pulls in in the MORGAN. He gets out and heads for the front door--his entrance.

JONATHAN
Bennie!
(whistles; then)
Bennie!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

JONATHAN walks through the neighborhood, calling and whistling for Bennie.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE

JONATHAN walks to the front door:

JONATHAN
(calling, one last time)
Bennie!

On the handle of the front door is a NOTICE from the ELECTRIC COMPANY, warning that service will be cut off for non-payment. He puts it in his pocket.

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN winds the clock.

JONATHAN
Bennie?

JONATHAN walks purposefully up the stairs.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

SUSAN listens with growing agitation to the angry voices coming from the floor below. She opens her door; the voices increase in volume. "I'm not going to answer your accusations." "I don't trust you." "Don't put me on trial." "Where's my dog?"

INT. HALLWAY

JONATHAN and BARBARA stand at opposite ends of the hallway, spewing venom at each other.

SUSAN
Stop it! Stop it!

They are silenced by this surprising intrusion.

JONATHAN
Susan--

SUSAN
Oh shut up! I know I may be overstepping the boundaries--

BARBARA
Kicking the shit out of them, I'd say.

SUSAN
If you really don't want to be together, then don't be together. Have you totally forgotten you have children? Well think of them for a second!

From behind Eve and Josh's closed doors comes the sound of APPLAUSE. JONATHAN and BARBARA look at each other, then Jonathan's eyes turn down; Barbara's stay riveted on his face.

INT. ENTRY - DAY

SUITCASES are carried down the stairs by JONATHAN, who looks not very happy.

EVE
I don't feel good about this at all.

JONATHAN
It's for the best. We'll talk on the phone.

EVE follows him down.

EXT. ROSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

JONATHAN hoists the suitcases, putting them on the roof rack of EVE'S HONDA. JOSH stands on the other side of the car and helps tie down the load.

JOSH
I don't want to go.

JONATHAN
Sure you do. Spring break. Ocean City. Sun. Sand. Girls.

JOSH
Spring break doesn't start for a week.

JONATHAN
So you're taking your books, you can study and get a tan at the same time. I'd say you're a lucky kid.

EVE hugs BARBARA goodbye.

EVE
I feel weird leaving.

BARBARA
Your father and I need some time alone to work things out. By the time you get back, this will all be settled.

EVE
Promise?

BARBARA
Cross my heart and hope to die.

SUSAN puts a bag in the car.

JONATHAN
Take good care of them.

SUSAN
Who's going to take care of you?

EVE
Okay, I guess we're going.

EVE and JOSH get in. SUSAN nestles herself in the backseat.

EVE
You sure about this?

JONATHAN
Yes. Just have a great time. Don't worry about us.

The car backs down the driveway.

INT. HONDA

SUSAN looks straight ahead.

SUSAN'S POV

EVE'S FACE, turned toward her. JOSH, looking out the side window, his eyes filling with tears. JONATHAN and BARBARA standing in the driveway, waving, the HOUSE looming behind them.

EXT. STREET

The HONDA turns, and starts away down the street. JONATHAN and BARBARA look at each other.

BENNIE, looking dirty and matted, runs across the street. JONATHAN greets him happily.

JONATHAN
You horny old bastard!

His relief and joy color his feelings for Barbara. JONATHAN starts to say something to her. She turns and enters the house through the side door. JONATHAN, followed by BENNIE, goes to the front door.

INT. ROSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

BARBARA, dressed in something velvet, mixes a caesar salad.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN puts ice in a glass.

INT. KITCHEN

BARBARA arranges a veal chop and vegetables on a plate.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN looks through records, choosing a Vivaldi album.

INT. DINING ROOM

BARBARA sets a plate on a placemat, pours some white wine.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN puts on the record, adjusting the volume on the BANG & OLUFSEN STEREO.

INT. DINING ROOM

BARBARA smiles, sits, arranges her napkin. The MUSIC is lovely, the food delicious, the chandelier above the table is dimmed. A romantic moment. BARBARA lifts her glass and toasts--

We PAN the length of the table, passing the empty chair at the opposite end, continuing to pan until we are--

INT. STUDY

Where JONATHAN raises his glass of scotch, smiles, dips into a box of crackers.

INT. DINING ROOM

BARBARA reaches into her lap and produces the remote control for the stereo, aims it, presses a button. The record slows with a sick cow sound.

INT. STUDY

JONATHAN calmly rises, lifts the tone arm, lifts the record by its edges, and THROWS IT at BARBARA. THE RECORD sails up, hitting the chandelier above the dining room table, making it swing.

INT. DINING ROOM

BARBARA doesn't flinch. Her eyes move up, taking in the record lodged in the swinging chandelier. She pops a forkful of food in her mouth, making an appreciative noise. Light and shadow slide over her. She continues to eat.

INT. BARBARA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Her bed is strewn with cookbooks, papers. BARBARA takes a tranquilizer.

INT. JONATHAN'S ROOM - MORNING

Gray morning light. SOUNDS of a struggle in the bed. BENNIE cowers in a corner. The comforter bubbles with violence. It slips off, and JONATHAN is revealed, alone, beating himself up, punching himself. The CLOCK RADIO goes off; JONATHAN wakes suddenly. He feels his face.

JONATHAN
No more drinking.

INT. JONATHAN'S BATHROOM

Unwashed towels, an overflowing waste basket, dirty sink. JONATHAN freshens his suit with a damp washcloth.

INT. ENTRY - DAY

JONATHAN is met by BARBARA at the bottom of the stairs.

BARBARA
Could you possibly be in the house between noon and midnight?

JONATHAN
Why?

BARBARA
Exterminators are coming to fill it with poison gas. We have wood boring beetles. You probably brought them in with that cheap Burmese chest you bought Eve. They'll turn everything to sawdust.

JONATHAN
That's a solution.

BARBARA
(starting for door)
I'm late for a meeting. Anyway, stay out of the house if you don't want to
(she makes a gasping sound)

JONATHAN
That's my door, darling. Yours is the side door.

BARBARA exits through the dining room. JONATHAN looks into the living room, his attention drawn to a cabinet holding a collection of Staffordshire pieces. The PHONE RINGS. He opens a small door in the entry wall, revealing a guest phone.

JONATHAN
(on phone)
Hello?

INT. JONATHAN'S OFFICE - DAY

JONATHAN paces, talking on the phone.

JONATHAN
(into phone)
Yes, a black tie dinner party at the house at eight o'clock tonight! The food editor from the Post called to confirm the time. The wood boring beetle story was just a ruse to keep me away.

INTERCUT with GARY CHERNISH in his OFFICE.

GARY
(into phone)
She can have dinner parties--

JONATHAN
She lied!

GARY
She can lie.

JONATHAN
One of my Staffordshire figures is missing. Worth easily a thousand dollars. She took it to finance this dinner. We have her. I want to file a criminal complaint--

GARY
Unless you have proof, there aren't grounds.

JONATHAN
Come on! We can nail her!

GARY
Jonathan... maybe this living arrangement isn't working as well as we hoped--

JONATHAN
(desperate)
It is working! It is. I go off the deep end sometimes, but I rely on you to keep me straight. I mean, I really appreciate being able to unload to you.

GARY
No, I really advise we rethink our whole approach. Come by the office and let's talk about this. Are you free...the twenty-third?

JONATHAN flips pages in his desk appointment book.

JONATHAN
But it's already... you mean next month?

GARY
I'm going on vacation.

JONATHAN
Vacation?

GARY
Thurmont takes six weeks in the spring. I'm only taking thirty days. Just going to Barbados. Ever been there?

JONATHAN
No.

Jonathan hangs up. Presses his fingertips together, hard, then CLAPS his hands. On the CLAP:

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

Cars are parked at the curb. The SOUND of party chatter is heard.

INT. ROSE DINING ROOM

EIGHT GUESTS in black tie attire are seated at the table. A white-jacketed SERVANT dishes soup from a large tureen. JONATHAN'S FACE peers through the bottom of the window. BARBARA wears a satin chemise; we may notice perspiration rings, pointing up the labor that went into this dinner.

BARBARA
There's really no rhyme or reason to tonight's menu other than these are the dishes I have the most fun making--

MRS. DEWITT
It smells glorious. We were Barbara's very first clients--

MR. FISK
(speaking surreptitiously into small tape recorder)
The dinner evolved into what can only be called a gran degustacion as Barbara Rose offered up her personal favorite recipes...

BARBARA
Well, dig in.

As the GUESTS prepare to dig in, JONATHAN enters, dressed in TAILS.

JONATHAN
Hello, darling. Sorry I'm late. Kiss kiss everyone. I won't sit next to you, I'm afraid I'm coming down with a bad cold--

He whips a tissue from his pocket, lightly blows his nose, balls up the tissue, and throws it in the soup tureen.

The GUESTS stare at the sinking tissue.

JONATHAN
Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to go and piss on the roast.

JONATHAN exits toward the kitchen.

BARBARA
(rising; to guests)
Please begin...he didn't throw anything in <u>your</u> soup... Begin. <u>Please</u>!

She motions the SERVANT to pick up the tureen and follow her.

INT. KITCHEN

JONATHAN pulls out an oven rack, on which is a WHOLE SALMON.

BARBARA
Jonathan, those people are my clients. The food editor for the Post is out there!

JONATHAN
Well then I really feel terrible. What a gaff! You're serving fish, I drank red wine-

MR. FISK enters just as JONATHAN opens his fly with a loud "ZIP".

FISK
Is everything all right?

JONATHAN turns slightly. FISK'S FACE reflects his having seen a genre of meat not usually seen in the kitchen. FISK backs out.

BARBARA
I would never humiliate you like this.

JONATHAN
No, you're not equipped to.

The SERVANT giggles.

BARBARA throws a copper pot at JONATHAN; he ducks.

INT. DINING ROOM

The GUESTS leap to their feet as they hear the pot CLANG.

FISK
A family tiff seems to be developing. I don't know if we should leave...but I definitely advise skipping the fish entirely.

INT. KITCHEN

BARBARA slams out the side door.

JONATHAN
Leaving so soon, baby doll? What will I tell the guests?

The SOUND of the WAGONEER starting. JONATHAN moves quickly out the door.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

BARBARA backs the WAGONEER out of the garage.

BARBARA
Move your car.

JONATHAN looks at his MORGAN parked at the head of the driveway.

BARBARA
Oh, nevermind, I'll move it.

JONATHAN runs toward the MORGAN. The WAGONEER accelerates, keeping pace with him, then passing him, contacting the front bumper of the MORGAN an instant before he can get there. The WAGONEER pushes the MORGAN backward toward the street as JONATHAN manages to clamber into the car.

THE WAGONEER

brakes; the MORGAN silently rolls backward, carried by momentum.

JONATHAN

fumbles with the key, manages to start the engine, looks up to see--

THE WAGONEER

roaring head on, emergency lights flashing. It hits the front quarter of the MORGAN, smashing the front fender, sending steam shooting from the fractured radiator.

JONATHAN

gnashes the gears and tugs the steering wheel. Steam obscures his vision.

BARBARA

leans out her window, checking the damage: the front wheel grates on the nearly severed front fender, the grillwork is non existant, the rear tires spin in the water and oil spilled from the tortured engine.

THE MORGAN

wheezes down the street. JONATHAN glances in his rearview mirror and sees THE WAGONEER bearing down on him. He braces for the crash, but--

THE WAGONEER

swerves and passes by, continues down the block, turns, and slowly approaches. It contacts the front end of the MORGAN--gently--and pushes it backward until it is in front of the house.

THE DINNER GUESTS

gathered on the sidewalk watch in stunned silence.

BARBARA

leans out her window and smiles pleasantly.

BARBARA
Get out of the car, hon.

JONATHAN

crams the gearshift into reverse in a last attempt to escape.

THE WAGONEER

backs up slowly, preparing to ram.

BARBARA
Leave it, Jonathan.

JONATHAN
(shouts)
You'll have to kill me!

THE WAGONEER

accelerates toward the crippled car.

JONATHAN

sits, resigned, staring at the oncoming headlights. A screech of brakes sounds, then--

THE WAGONEER

stops. Inches away. JONATHAN shakes his head and grins: he knew she didn't have the guts to go all the way.

BARBARA

shakes her head and grins: he's a fool. She shoves the lever into 4-wheel drive, revs the engine and--

THE WAGONEER

rears like a stallion, the front wheels churning.

JONATHAN

terrified, ducks, as--

THE WAGONEER

whomps down, buckling the MORGAN'S HOOD. The WAGONEER literally crawls over the MORGAN, crushing it.

JONATHAN

looks up from the floorboards, seeing the underside of the WAGONEER pass over, hearing his beloved car crack and splinter around him.

EXT. STREET

The WAGONEER continues over the MORGAN, leaving it a pile of buckled metal and splayed wheels. The WAGONEER'S BRAKELIGHTS go on, illuminating the smoking, steaming wreckage in a HELLISH RED LIGHT.

JONATHAN

after a very long moment, rises from the carnage. In his hand is the CRANK HANDLE, which Barbara used so long ago to start her Christmas gift to Jonathan.

JONATHAN
O-kay! The gloves are off!

BARBARA

looks back and laughs quietly.

JONATHAN
I'm taking you to court.

BARBARA
Our lawyers are on vacation.

JONATHAN steps out of the rubble and walks toward the WAGONEER.

JONATHAN
Let's not make a scene, eh? I have to live in this neighborhood. So let's just--

He has just about reached the driver's window, when BARBARA punches the accelerator, and the car leaps forward.

JONATHAN

swings the crank like a rookie going for a fast one high and outside. He watches the WAGONEER disappear down the block.

He stalks back toward the house, withering the gathered guests with a look.

JONATHAN
What? You've never had an argument with your wife?

He continues toward the house.

INT. ENTRY - NIGHT

The front door slams, making the crystal of the CHANDELIER jingle. JONATHAN starts up the stairs, stops, goes back down and winds the GRANDFATHER CLOCK.

He glances into the dining room, which shows signs of the guests' hurried exit: chairs at odd angles; napkins on the table, floor, and chairs; full soup bowls; candles burning. He goes into the room and blows out the candles.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - DAY

A lovely day in the neighborhood. The remains of the MORGAN are piled at the curb. In front of the wreck is a TRUCK from the electric utility company. We HEAR the HUM of airconditioners and an early morning TV weatherman: "... a trough of high pressure to the east will be bringing us more of that hot humid weather..."

INT. BARBARA'S BEDROOM

BARBARA sprawls on the bed, wearing T-shirt and panties. The WINDOW AIR CONDITIONER and TELEVISION go silent. She awakes, swings her legs out of bed, flips the remote control on the TV. Nothing. She rises and twists a knob on the air conditioner. Nothing. She tries a lamp. A VOICE penetrates her door:

JONATHAN (O.S.)
You forgot to pay the electric bill, didn't you, baby doll? It's going to get hot.

BARBARA
Thanks for your concern. I'm touched you thought of me before your wine collection.

INT. ROSE STUDY - DAY

JONATHAN ENTERS, carrying six wine bottles. He pulls at the doors to the ARMOIRE but they appear to be stuck. He pulls harder, and the ARMOIRE topples toward him. He drops the bottles and braces it with his hands. He twists to support it on his back, and he sees on the table in front of him--

TWO STAFFORDSHIRE PIECES

Lovers. A girl offering an apple to a boy.

JONATHAN

groans, partly from the weight, partly from the thought of these pieces being demolished. He stretches his hands to reach them, to save them, but can't quite reach them. He squats, but that only makes matters worse.

BARBARA (O.S.)
What happened? Do you need help?

JONATHAN
Yes--

BARBARA, sweaty and half naked, moves toward him.

The TELEPHONE RINGS. As BARBARA turns --

JONATHAN
Take the Staffordshires--please.

BARBARA
Don't go away.

BARBARA picks up the Staffordshire pieces and heads toward--

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA answers the phone.

BARBARA
(on phone)
Hello...well I was just about to call you. How's the beach?... We're fine, fine.

A loud GROAN and CRASH from the dining room.

BARBARA
(on phone)
Daddy says hi...Well, if things go as planned, everything will be back to normal before Spring break ends...I'm glad, too.

BARBARA hears the SOUNDS of JONATHAN freeing himself.

BARBARA
(on phone)
I have to run. Love to both of you. Next time I'll call you.

BARBARA hangs up and runs.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

EVE hangs up. SUSAN and JOSH sit on the bed.

EVE
Mom says everything's fine.

JOSH
You think it is?

SUSAN
I'm sure it is. They're... rational people... at the base.

INT. DINING ROOM

JONATHAN, moving with a slight limp, almost has BARBARA cornered. She suddenly vaults over the dining room table. The Staffordshire figures are tucked in her bra.

BARBARA
Admit it, that was a good one. I sawed the front legs with your coping saw.

JONATHAN
Give me the Staffordshires.

JONATHAN circles toward her. She holds up one figure as if to smash it.

JONATHAN
I know you won't. You love these things as much as I do.

BARBARA
More.

BARBARA smashes the figure and darts for the stairs in the instant that JONATHAN is distracted.

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA springs up the stairs. As she reaches the midway point, the brass rod holding the runner breaks loose. BARBARA falls and slides along with the runner and brass rods to the base of the stairs. BARBARA lands in a heap at the bottom.

JONATHAN stands there, observing this cascade of carpet and wife. BARBARA groans, battered and breathless from the fall.

JONATHAN
You know...I haven't been sleeping... so I've had so much time to think. And...
(MORE)

JONATHAN
(continuing)
I'm not doing this out of spite or because I want to win... necessarily. It's just that... I have an innate sense of fairness.

JONATHAN steps over her, bending to pick up the unbroken Staffordshire figure on the stairs. He continues up the stairs.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

The houses to either side have lights on. The Rose house is totally dark.

INT. JONATHAN'S ROOM

JONATHAN springs awake, turns on a flashlight. He digs through a pile of dirty clothes to his briefcase, opens it, scatters papers, looking for his appointment book. He finds it, frantically leafs through.

The flashlight beam illuminates a page:

LARRABEE CONFIRM. HEARING
10:30 a. Sen. ofc. 210

He looks at the date on his wristwatch. The hearing is the next day. He didn't miss it. He lies down, relieved, and turns off the flashlight. A silence. Then he suddenly sits up in the darkness--

JONATHAN
Bennie?

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - MORNING

Another seemingly normal day in this lovely neighborhood. A NEIGHBOR WOMAN waters some shrubs in her front yard.

INT. JONATHAN'S BATHROOM

Dirty sink. Overflowing wastebasket. Clumps of towels. JONATHAN, looking exhausted, wearing a desultory shave, uses a damp washcloth to wipe off the suit he wears.

INT. HALLWAY

JONATHAN opens his door and spots a NOTE taped to it.

We have to talk
9pm Our Dining Room

JONATHAN takes out a pen and writes on the back:

Mr. Jonathan Rose (will) will not attend.

He tapes it on Barbara's door.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE

JONATHAN walks somewhat jauntily down the walkway. He pauses to look at the remains of his MORGAN, opens the trunk, takes out the car cover, drapes it over the corpse.

EXT. SENATE BUILDING - DAY

JONATHAN gets out of a cab and starts up the steps.

CHAIRMAN'S VOICE
This morning the committee will consider the nomination of Mr. Jason M. Larrabee to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs. Do you have a statement, Mr. Larrabee?

INT. ROOM 210 SENATE OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

LARRABEE
No, Mr. Chairman, I have no prepared statement.

JONATHAN sits next to LARRABEE at a small table. Across from them sit the MEMBERS of the Committee on Armed Services and their AIDES.

SENATOR
I have a brief question concerning the possible conflict of interest due to your holdings as a minority stockholder in Apex Aerospace Inc.

JONATHAN taps LARRABEE'S shoulder. LARRABEE leans over for a conference.

JONATHAN
(sotto)
I'm not sure how to handle this. Do I lay aside what she's done?--
(MORE)

JONATHAN
(continuing)
Locking me in the sauna, demolishing my car, booby-trapping the armoire? She seems like she wants a truce, so I guess I have to go with an open mind. Thanks.

The SENATOR waits.

JONATHAN leans away. LARRABEE looks at him and nods, as if they have conferred and agreed.

LARRABEE
Yes, Senator. My interest in Apex is in the process of being put in a blind trust for the duration of my term.

SENATOR
By what date do you anticipate filing the trust documents?

JONATHAN leans over to LARRABEE.

JONATHAN
(sotto)
Nine o'clock tonight. Our dining room. Falling down the stairs obviously scared some sense into her. That round was mine.

JONATHAN leans back, punching LARRABEE on the shoulder.

LARRABEE
My attorney informs me that the documents are being completed as we speak.

JONATHAN leans over again.

JONATHAN
You know what's crazy? I'd take her back even after all this.
(sniffles)
I just love her I guess. God I miss her.

JONATHAN looks away, his eyes filled with tears.

The SENATORS wait.

SENATOR
You have something to add?

JONATHAN
If it's all right with you gentlemen, I think I'm going to take a walk.

JONATHAN rises and walks out of the meeting room doors, letting them slam shut.

INT. ROSE KITCHEN - DAY

BARBARA, wearing bra, panties, and an apron which totally covers the front of her body, pounds something with a meat tenderizing mallet. She pounds three times then stops, hearing what sounds like an echo coming from another part of the house. She pounds again and waits. Again comes the answering sound, which she realizes is the sound of the knocker on the front door.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

A YOUNG MAN in a cotton suit, bangs the knocker, waits, then starts to slip a card in the door. The door opens. BARBARA stands in the half open doorway.

YOUNG MAN
Sorry to disturb you. I was just about to leave my card. I've always admired this house and...

BARBARA
(looking at card)
You're a real estate agent.

YOUNG MAN
Yes, I just thought...if you ever consider selling it--

BARBARA
I'm not at the moment.

YOUNG MAN
Uh, would you mind if I just... took a peek at the inside?

BARBARA hesitates, studying the kind, handsome face of the young man.

BARBARA
It's a little messy right now.

YOUNG MAN
I don't mind.

BARBARA opens the door and the YOUNG MAN steps into--

INT. ENTRY

He looks at the stair runner heaped at the bottom of the stairs, glances off to the disarray in the dining room.

BARBARA
The cleaning lady didn't show up.

YOUNG MAN
Well...to get a good price you'd have to improve the appearance of everything...except yourself.

He smiles. BARBARA puts a hand to her hair and smoothes it.

YOUNG MAN
(continuing)
Listen, uh, I'll let you get back to what you were doing. But if you want to talk about selling it... or if you just want to talk or maybe have some dinner--

BARBARA
How do you know I'm not married?

YOUNG MAN
(an embarrassed pause)
I, uh, checked the divorce filings. That's how I find a lot of properties. But I also really do admire this house.

BARBARA
I'm not ready to...go out. But could you call me every week until I am? I don't think it'll be that long.

BARBARA smiles at him, liking him, liking feeling some kind of warm emotion for a man. SHE HUGS HIM suddenly and strongly, pressing her cheek to his chest.

YOUNG MAN
Um...sure.

BARBARA clings to him for a long moment, then releases him.

BARBARA
Good seein' you--
(looks at his card)
--Eric.

HE EXITS. BARBARA closes the door.

BARBARA
(to herself)
That was nice.

BARBARA heads back toward the kitchen.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dark except for a GLOW in the DINING ROOM WINDOW.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A SILVER CANDELABRUM glows with five candles. BARBARA, dressed in a serving gown, arranges a plate of pate and crackers on the dining room table.

JONATHAN, showered, casual but natty, appears in the doorway, holding an open bottle of wine.

JONATHAN
I opened a great old one so it could breathe. You look... beautiful.

BARBARA
I feel good.

JONATHAN decants the wine into a crystal decanter.

JONATHAN
I was surprised--happily surprised by your invitation.

They sit. JONATHAN pours her a glass of wine. BARBARA spreads pate on a piece of toast for him.

BARBARA
Thank you for the wine. I hope it's not poison.

JONATHAN
(holding pate cracker)
Same here.

They look at each other in the candleglow, then, in a show of mutual trust, BARBARA drinks the wine, JONATHAN eats the pate.

BARBARA
We've made a mess of things.

JONATHAN
Yes, we sure have.

BARBARA
Eve and Josh will be home Sunday. I want them to return to something resembling normal life.

JONATHAN
I do, too.
(pause)
Sitting here like this, it's hard to believe we can't be happy.

He spreads more pate. She pours more wine.

BARBARA
We can be. Just not together. I'm asking you one last time to leave the house, for everyone's sake. You can take the Wagoneer, fill it with as much as it will hold.

JONATHAN
I can't do that.

BARBARA
You make so much money, you can buy another house, you can replace everything--

JONATHAN
Except you.

He reaches out his hand and puts it atop hers. She stares at it.

JONATHAN
You'll find this hard to believe-- I find it hard to believe-- but I still love you, I still want you--

BARBARA
Obviously what you find hard to believe is that I don't want you.

JONATHAN
(pause)
I do have trouble with that. I mean, I think I'm a pretty good person. As people go.
(pause)
Tell me what's wrong with me.

BARBARA
You married me.

She withdraws her hand.

JONATHAN
What do you mean?

BARBARA
Who you marry says a lot about who you are. Don't you think? We define each other... I'm part of you and you're part of me.

JONATHAN
All right...so--

BARBARA
So how good a person can you be if you married me? Because I don't think I'm really a very good person at all. I think I'm pretty horrible.

JONATHAN
Well, you're wrong. We've been horrible to each other, but we're still decent human beings. We haven't passed any point of no return.

BARBARA
I have.

JONATHAN
I don't believe that. Nobody that makes pate this good can be all bad.

He pops a piece into his mouth.

BARBARA
That depends on what the pate is made of.

JONATHAN looks at her, a question forming in his mind.

BARBARA
(answering his unspoken question)
Woof!

JONATHAN
You wouldn't go that far.

BARBARA
You have no idea how far I'll go.

JONATHAN
(looks at pate)
Bennie?
(an insane Bellow)
BENNIE!

JONATHAN sweeps the plates and candles off the table. BARBARA throws the wine bottle at him. He ducks and turns over the table. BARBARA runs for the stairs.

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA scrambles up the stairs. JONATHAN grabs her ankle, but she pulls away and kicks him in the chest, sending him tumbling down the stairs. The CLOCK strikes the hour.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE

EVE'S HONDA pulls to the curb. SUSAN gets out. She lifts a corner of the car cover and peers at the crumpled MORGAN. She approaches the house, puzzled and a little scared by the total darkness. Yellowing NEWPAPERS are piled on the porch.

SUSAN walks across the porch and peers through a window, but the curtains are drawn and it's dark inside so she can't see anything.

SUSAN walks around the house, trying to ascertain what might be going on inside. She hears a faint CRASHING NOISE. She knocks on the side door, tries the handle, but can't get in. She starts around toward the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD

The shrubbery is withered, the grass dead. SUSAN looks up at the dark windows. One appears to be open a few inches. She tests the strength of a trellis which extends up the side of the house. The ivy is dry and brittle. She begins to climb.

SUSAN reaches the partially open window and tries to open it enough so she can crawl in. But it's stuck. She puts all her strength to it. The window flies up, its GLASS SHATTERING. At the same moment, the TRELLIS BREAKS under the strain. SUSAN just manages to grab the windowsill and pull herself in.

INT. JOSH'S ROOM

SUSAN crawls through the window, landing on her knees. She yelps in pain as a shard of glass cuts her knee. Blood trickles down her shin. She takes a penlight from her purse and checks the damage.

INT. HALLWAY

SUSAN, her way lit by the dim penlight, walks down the hallway.

SUSAN
(almost unable to speak)
Hello?

She listens, hearing some sounds, becoming more frightened.

She moves gingerly along a wall. Something touches her face; she whirls, snagging a piece of nylon line. POTS and PANS rain down, knocking her to the floor. She picks herself up and scrambles toward the servant stairs.

INT. SERVANT STAIRS

A dark, narrow tunnel of a stairway. Her breathing resounds in the confined space. She moves quickly but carefully, straining to see what lies ahead in the light of the penlight. She reaches the bottom and pushes open the door to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

SUSAN breathes a sigh of relief as she reaches open space. But as soon as her foot hits the floor, she begins to slip. The floor is covered with oil. She slides across the floor and makes a desperate grab for the handle on the oven door to support herself. The oven door opens and a SWARM of FLIES buzz out into her face. She is looking at--and smelling--the rotten carcass of the fish left unserved at Barbara's dinner party. She's panicked now. On the verge of hysteria and nausea.

She gets to the kitchen door and pulls at it, but it won't open. As fast as one can go on a greased floor, SUSAN crosses to the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM

She runs through the dining room, falling over one of the overturned chairs. She's scrambling to get to the front door, frantic to escape from this scene of carnage. She's on her feet, really moving. She gets to the front door and is fumbling with oily fingers to open the locks when--

WHOOSH! A METAL BAR passes so close to her head it stands her hair on end. She whirls to see--

JONATHAN

His face glistens with sweat. He points a flashlight at her.

JONATHAN
Oh, sorry. I thought you were Barbara. You're a little shorter than she is. I woulda had her.

BARBARA'S VOICE
(from somewhere upstairs)
Get out! Get out!

JONATHAN turns, cocking the handcrank.

SUSAN opens the door and is out and running.

EXT. HOUSE

SUSAN runs to the end of the walkway.

SUSAN
Please, Jonathan--

The door slams shut. She stands there, staring at the house, trying to regain control of herself, trying to make sense of what she saw or thought she saw.

SUSAN'S POV

The house. In the light cast by the streetlamp we can just make out, in one of the dark windows, JONATHAN'S FACE. And in another window we can see BARBARA'S FACE. They look more phantasmal than human. And they don't look like they want company.

EXT. PAYPHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

The Honda is parked by the booth. SUSAN is on the phone.

SUSAN
(on phone)
I'm going to wait outside the house until a policeman arrives...Oh you have to be able to get someone there sooner than that!...Damn it, be human! These people are going to hurt each other...Well, I'm making note of the time of this call and if anything happens, then you'll be in trouble.
(hangs up; dials; angrily; shaking)
Eve Rose's room.
(pleasantly)
Eve, Susan... Yes, I did and they seemed fine... No, you can't... because I'm calling from a phone booth... Nothing is going on, nothing you're equipped to deal with anyway. Eve... Eve... Eve--

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - NIGHT

The SOUND of GLASS BREAKING.

INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY

JONATHAN drinks wine from a crystal goblet. He wets his finger and runs it around the rim, making a high pitched, eerie sound.

JONATHAN
(calls)
Come have a drink with me. I'm using the good crystal... the Baccarat--

He slugs down the wine and walks--

INT. DINING ROOM

JONATHAN walks through, pouring more wine, drinking it.

JONATHAN
(calls)
Tell me--how many booby traps did you set?

BARBARA'S VOICE
I'm not telling. How many did you set?

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN reaches the base of the stairs. He puts a hand on the bannister--it's loose.

JONATHAN
(calls)
Nine. Nine great ones.

BARBARA appears at the second floor railing.

BARBARA
Only nine? Aw, you still care.

She leans on the second floor railing. It gives way and she nearly falls.

JONATHAN
And that isn't even one of the great ones.

JONATHAN smashes the goblet, then charges up the stairs after BARBARA, who disappears into the darkness.

INT. ATTIC

BARBARA lies on her stomach, using a brace and bit to bore a hole in the attic floor. A FLASHLIGHT rests on a thick beam, illuminating a heavy nut and bolt protruding through the beam. She can HEAR the glass shattering, and JONATHAN'S SHOUTS to her. She works quickly, her face sweating with the effort.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE

SUSAN sits in the Honda, watching the house. On the radio is a late night talk show, the topic of which is "How to please your man."

A POLICE CRUISER rounds the corner, slows a bit, turns on it's spotlights and flicks the light across the neighbor's house.

SUSAN gets out of the Honda, expecting to talk to the cops before they enter the house. But the POLICE CRUISER doesn't stop.

SUSAN
(calling)
You call that investigating?
That's not even the right house!

SUSAN stands in the street, helplessly watching the departing police cruiser.

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN runs a piece of nylon line across the entrance to the living room. We don't know why now, but we'll find out. He starts up the stairs again. The CLOCK STOPS TICKING. It's as if his heart stopped. He hurries to wind it.

INT. ATTIC

BARBARA applies a large crescent wrench to the nut; she closes one eye to peer through the hole she bored in the floor.

BARBARA'S POV

Like a bombsight. The chandelier, the clock, JONATHAN.

INT. ATTIC.

BARBARA cranks the nut, over which we HEAR the SOUND of the clock's being wound.

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN continues to wind the clock, oblivious to the small glowing hole next to the chandelier anchor, and to the slight rotation of the chandelier.

INT. ATTIC

The wrench backs the nut off to the final few threads.

BARBARA
I give you the chandelier--

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN finishes winding the clock and moves away.

INT. ATTIC

BARBARA hisses, furious at her missed timing. The closeness and heat of the attic combined with her physical effort have coated her body with sweat.

INT. KITCHEN

JONATHAN nails boards across the door, preventing any exit.

JONATHAN
(singing)
It's a quarter to three, there's
no one in the place except you
and me--

INT. OCEAN CITY BUS STATION

People board a bus bound for Washington. Among them are EVE and JOSH.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - DAWN

SUSAN sleeps in the car. On the radio is a weather brief calling for more hot weather.

INT. EVE'S BEDROOM

JONATHAN searches for BARBARA. He pokes the crank under the bed. He becomes attentive as he hears a strange sound coming from downstairs: an intermittent clink.

INT. ENTRY

The front door, like the kitchen door, is boarded up. A HEADLESS STAFFORDSHIRE FIGURE is placed in front of the door.

JONATHAN moves quietly down the stairs and sees--

BARBARA

Holding the meat tenderizing mallet. Surrounded by a small army of headless Staffordshire figurines.

BARBARA
(sees Jonathan)
Good morning.

JONATHAN runs down the stairs. BARBARA dashes into the living room, leaping the nylon line -- the trigger for the booby trap JONATHAN set earlier. JONATHAN dashes after her, snags the line, and has a horrible moment of realization before he is hit with an overstuffed chair falling from the high ceiling.

BARBARA vaults over the chair.

BARBARA
Clever.

And she's gone. JONATHAN picks himself up and swings the crank in sheer frustration and pique.

JONATHAN
Come on, Barbara!

JONATHAN stalks off through the house which already shows the results of a night-long marathon of destruction. We can hear JONATHAN smashing things as he walks through the house in search of BARBARA. Almost all that was beautiful, all they sought to possess, has been destroyed.

EXT. ROSE HOUSE - DAWN

The sunrise colors the house in pastels, making it look totally peaceful and beautiful. A WOMAN walks her small dog past, totally unaware of what lies behind the stately front door. A newspaper flies from a passing car and lands in the front yard.

SUSAN sleeps in the Honda.

INT. DINING ROOM

JONATHAN hums, does a little dance step, and pokes the crank through another display case. He freezes. Then he reaches through the hole he made and takes out the IVORY CARVING that brought BARBARA and him together. He turns it in his hand, remembering.

Feeling a presence, JONATHAN whirls. BARBARA stands in the doorway, moist with sweat, hair matted, stripped to bra and panties.

JONATHAN
If I'da had another twenty dollars, we might not be here now.

BARBARA
You might've had worse than me.

JONATHAN
Highly doubtful. Why did you ever buy it? You didn't know what it was.

BARBARA
A Japanese something or other, you said. You always knew all the answers.

JONATHAN
Chinese. A Chinese medical homunculus--

BARBARA
I still don't know what it is.

JONATHAN
Medical students in China in the eighteenth century weren't allowed to see a woman naked. So these very detailed carvings were made so they could study the intricacies of the female. You knew I wanted it, yet you outbid me, you couldn't let me win.

BARBARA
I just liked it, that's all. May I have it?

JONATHAN
Tell you what...give it to me, and I'll let you have everything else in the house.

BARBARA thinks for a moment.

BARBARA
Nah.

JONATHAN
Okay.

He throws it up and hits it with the crank. The carving flies through a window and lands outside on the grass.

JONATHAN
Go get it.

Furious, she starts for him.

EXT. HOUSE

SUSAN awakes. She gets out, goes to the front door. She knocks and then tries to open the door. She goes around to the side of the house. We HEAR a DOG BARKING in the distance.

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA, wielding the crank, pursues JONATHAN up the stairs. At the top, she swings mightily at him; he dodges; she loses her balance and falls against the bannister, which gives way and BARBARA falls, just managing to save herself by grabbing hold of the chandelier.

BARBARA hangs on, looking up at the eyebolt holding the chandelier. She looks down and it seems a long way to the quarry tile floor below.

JONATHAN
Almost.

EXT. HOUSE

JOSH and EVE get out of a taxi. EVE goes to the front door, JOSH wanders onto the lawn and picks up the IVORY CARVING.

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA looks up at the bolt.

JONATHAN
Maybe we can swing over to the stairs.

He starts to swing.

BARBARA
Stop it! I loosened the bolt.

JONATHAN looks up, seeing the bolt wobbling in its hole. They are clearly in grave danger.

JONATHAN
Ooh--good one.

They HEAR EVE and JOSH pounding on the door and calling for them.

JONATHAN
Eve! Josh! Get a ladder, hurry.

EXT. HOUSE

EVE and JOSH look at each other puzzled.

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA
(calls)
Hurry!

JONATHAN
Don't worry, don't worry. We'll make it.

She rolls her eyes, doubting it.

JONATHAN
(pause; looks up)
Well, in case we don't--
Barbara--

BARBARA
Yes?

JONATHAN inches toward her.

EXT. HOUSE - GARAGE

EVE, JOSH, and SUSAN open the garage door.

JOSH
I don't know, he just said get a ladder.

They unhook the ladder from the side of the garage then turn to see BENNIE sitting in the driver seat of BARBARA'S WAGONEER. He pokes his nose through the partly open window.

EVE
What's Bennie doing here? What's going on?

INT. ENTRY

JONATHAN has managed to move almost next to BARBARA.

JONATHAN
There's no longer a reason on the planet to be anything but absolutely truthful. I never stopped loving you.

BARBARA
I know.

JONATHAN
And through all this, you loved me too, didn't you?

BARBARA blows a strand of hair out of her eyes. She turns and looks at him more directly than she has in years. She can do nothing but tell him the pure and absolute truth.

BARBARA
No.

JONATHAN twitches involuntarily.

The CHANDELIER turns one more degree.

INT. ATTIC

The bolt turns past one last thread.

INT. ENTRY

BARBARA looks up as the BOLT pulls free of the ceiling.

THE CHANDELIER heads for the floor with its two passengers.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The CHANDELIER hits the quarry tiles and explodes into shards of crystal. The CLOCK chimes madly. GLITTERING CRYSTAL settles on JONATHAN and BARBARA, sticking to their bodies, clothing them in brilliance.

ANOTHER ANGLE

JONATHAN and BARBARA lie motionless. Their bodies sparkle in the light pouring through the fan window. A very long moment passes. Then--

JONATHAN

with his last vestige of life, opens his eyes, reaches out his hand, and places it gently on BARBARA'S SHOULDER. He smiles. His eyes close. Dead. A very long moment passes. Then--

BARBARA

opens her eyes, and, slowly, with great effort, places her hand atop Jonathan's. A moment. Then, with her last breath, with her last vestige of strength, she THROWS HIS HAND OFF HER SHOULDER. Now she smiles. Her eyes close. She doesn't move. Ever again.

JONATHAN and BARBARA

lie as close as is possible without touching. Both are smiling, pleased with themselves. A happy ending.

FADE OUT.

THE END